

# Stories from The Strand - Addenda 1891-1900



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A STORY FOR CHILDREN : FROM THE FRENCH OF VOLTAIRE.

**I**N the reign of King Moabdar there lived at Babylon a young man named Zadig. He was handsome, rich, and naturally good-hearted ; and at the moment when this story opens, he was travelling on foot to see the world, and to learn philosophy and wisdom. But, hitherto, he had encountered so much misery, and endured so many terrible disasters, that he had become tempted to rebel against the will of Heaven, and to believe that the Providence which rules the world neglects the good, and lets the evil prosper. In this unhappy spirit he was one day walking on the banks of the Euphrates, when he chanced to meet a venerable hermit, whose snowy beard descended to his girdle, and who carried in his hand a scroll which he was reading with attention. Zadig stopped, and made him a low bow. The hermit returned the salutation with an air so kindly, and so noble, that Zadig felt a curiosity to speak to him. He inquired what scroll was that which he was reading.

"It is the Book of Destiny," replied the hermit, "would you like to read it?"

He handed it to Zadig ; but the latter, though he knew a dozen languages, could not understand a word of it. His curiosity increased.

"You appear to be in trouble," said the kindly hermit.

"Alas !" said Zadig, "I have cause to be so."

"If you will allow me," said the hermit. "I will accompany you. Perhaps I may be useful to you. I am sometimes able to console the sorrowful."

Zadig felt a deep respect for the appearance, the white beard, and the mysterious scroll of the old hermit, and perceived that



THE MYSTERIOUS SCROLL.



his conversation was that of a superior mind. The old man spoke of destiny, of justice, of morality, of the chief good of life, of human frailty, of virtue and of vice, with so much power and eloquence, that Zadig felt himself attracted by a kind of charm, and besought the hermit not to leave him until they should return to Babylon.

"I ask you the same favour," said the hermit. "Promise me that, whatever I may do, you will keep me company for several days."

Zadig gave the promise; and they set forth together.

That night the travellers arrived at a grand mansion. The hermit begged for food and lodging for himself and his companion. The porter, who might have been mistaken for a prince, ushered them in with a contemptuous air of welcome. The chief servant showed them the magnificent apartments; and they were then admitted to the bottom of the table, where the master of the mansion did not condescend to cast a glance at them. They were, however, served with delicacies in profusion, and after dinner washed their hands in a golden basin set with emeralds and rubies. They were then conducted for the night into a beautiful apartment; and the next morning, before they left the castle, a servant brought them each a piece of gold.

"The master of the house," said Zadig, as they went their way, "appears to be a generous man, although a trifle haughty. He practises a noble hospitality." As he spoke, he perceived that a kind of large pouch which the hermit carried appeared singularly distended; within it was the

golden basin, set with precious stones, which the old man had purloined. Zadig was amazed; but he said nothing.

At noon the hermit stopped before a little house, in which lived a wealthy miser, and once more asked for hospitality. An old valet in a shabby coat received them very rudely, showed them into the stable, and set before them a few rotten olives, some mouldy bread, and beer which had turned sour. The hermit ate and drank

with as much content as he had shown the night before; then, addressing the old valet, who had kept his eye upon them to make sure that they stole nothing, he gave him the two gold pieces which they had received that morning, and thanked him for his kind attention. "Be so good," he added, "as to let me see your master."

The astonished valet showed them in.

"Most mighty signor," said the hermit, "I can only render you my humble thanks for the noble manner in which you have received us. I beseech you to accept this golden basin as a token of my gratitude."

The miser almost fell backwards with amazement. The hermit, without waiting for him to recover, set off with speed, with his companion.

"Holy Father," said Zadig, "what does all this mean? You seem to me to resemble other men in nothing. You steal a golden basin set with jewels from a Signor who receives you with magnificence, and you give it to a curmudgeon who treats you with indignity."

"My son," replied the hermit, "this



"THEY WERE SERVED WITH DELICACIES."



mighty lord, who only welcomes travellers through vanity, and to display his riches, will henceforth grow wiser, while the miser will be taught to practise hospitality. Be amazed at nothing, and follow me."

Zadig knew not whether he was dealing with the most foolish or the wisest of all men. But the hermit spoke with such ascendancy that Zadig, who besides was fettered by his promise, had no choice except to follow him.

That night they came to an agreeable house, of simple aspect, and showing signs of neither prodigality nor avarice. The owner was a philosopher, who had left the world, and who studied peacefully the rules of virtue and of wisdom, and who yet was happy and contented.

He had built this calm retreat to please himself, and he received the strangers in it with a frankness which displayed no sign of ostentation. He conducted them himself to a comfortable chamber, where he made them rest awhile; then he returned to lead them to a dainty little supper. During their conversation they agreed that the affairs of this world are not always regulated by the opinions of the wisest men. But the hermit still maintained that the ways of Providence are wrapt in mystery, and that men do wrong to pass their judgment on a universe of which they only see the smallest part. Zadig wondered how a person who committed such mad acts could reason so correctly.

At length, after a conversation as agreeable as instructive, the host conducted the two travellers to their apartment, and thanked heaven for sending him two visitors so wise and virtuous. He offered them some money, but so frankly that they could not feel offended. The old man declined, and desired to say farewell, as he intended to depart for Babylon at break of day. They therefore parted on the warmest terms, and Zadig, above all, was filled with kindly feelings towards so amiable a man.

When the hermit and himself were in their chamber, they spent some time in

praises of their host. At break of day the old man woke his comrade.

"We must be going," he remarked. "But while everyone is still asleep, I wish to leave this worthy man a pledge of my esteem." With these words, he took a torch and set the house on fire.



"THE HERMIT DREW HIM AWAY."

Zadig burst forth into cries of horror, and would have stopped the frightful act. But the hermit, by superior strength, drew him away. The house was in a blaze; and the old man, who was now a good way off with his companion, looked back calmly at the burning pile.

"Heaven be praised!" he cried, "our kind host's house is destroyed from top to bottom!"

At these words Zadig knew not whether he should burst out laughing, call the reverend father an old rascal, knock him down, or run away. But he did neither. Still subdued by the superior manner of the hermit, he followed him against his will to their next lodging.

This was the dwelling of a good and charitable widow, who had a nephew of fourteen, her only hope and joy. She did her best to use the travellers well; and the next morning she bade her nephew guide them safely past a certain bridge, which, having recently been broken, had become dangerous to cross over. The youth, eager to oblige them, led the way.

"Come," said the hermit, when they were half across the bridge, "I must show my gratitude towards your aunt;" and as he spoke he seized the young man by the hair and threw him into the river. The youth



"ANGEL OF HEAVEN!" CRIED ZADIG.

fell, reappeared for an instant on the surface, and then was swallowed by the torrent.

"Oh, monster!" exclaimed Zadig, "oh, most detestable of men!"—

"You promised me more patience," interrupted the old man. "Listen! Beneath the ruins of that house which Providence saw fit to set on fire, the owner will discover an enormous treasure; while this young man, whose existence Providence cut short, would have killed his aunt within a year, and you yourself in two."

"Who told you so, barbarian?" cried

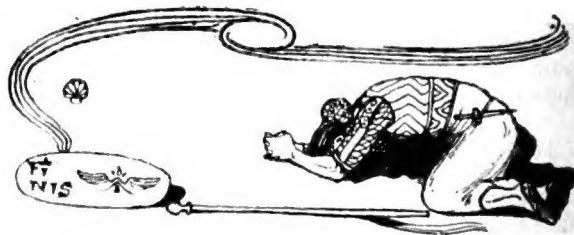
Zadig, "and even if you read the issue in your Book of Destiny, who gave you power to drown a youth who never injured you?"

While he spoke, he saw that the old man had a beard no longer, and that his face had become fair and young; his hermit's frock had disappeared; four white wings covered his majestic form, and shone with dazzling lustre.

"Angel of heaven!" cried Zadig, "you are then descended from the skies to teach an erring mortal to submit to the eternal laws?"

"Men," replied the angel Jezrael, "judge all things without knowledge; and you, or all men, most deserved to be enlightened. The world imagines that the youth who has just perished fell by chance into the water, and that by a like chance the rich man's house was set on fire. But there is no such thing as chance; all is trial, or punishment, or foresight. Feeble mortal, cease to argue and rebel against what you ought to adore!"

As he spoke these words the angel took his flight to heaven. And Zadig fell upon his knees.



## The Bundle of Letters.

FROM THE HUNGARIAN OF MORITZ JOKAI.



ONE of the celebrated medical practitioners of Pesth, Dr. K——, was one morning, at an early hour, obliged to receive a very pressing visitor. The man, who was waiting in the ante-room, sent in word by the footman that all delay would be dangerous to him; he had, therefore, to be received immediately.

The doctor hastily wrapped a dressing-gown about him, and directed the patient to be admitted to him.

He found himself in the presence of a man who was a complete stranger to him, but who appeared to belong to the best society, judging from his manners. On his

"You are Dr. K——?" he asked in a low and feeble tone of voice.

"That is my name, sir."

"Living in the country, I have not the honour of knowing you, except by reputation. But I cannot say that I am delighted to make your acquaintance, because my visit to you is not a very agreeable one."

Seeing that the sufferer's legs were hardly able to sustain him, the doctor invited him to be seated.

"I am fatigued. It is a week since I had any sleep. Something is the matter with my right hand; I don't what it is—whether it is a carbuncle, or cancer. At first the pain was slight, but now it is a continuous horrible burning, increasing from day to day. I could bear it no longer, so threw myself into my carriage and came to you, to beg you to cut out the affected spot, for an hour more of this torture will drive me mad."

The doctor tried to reassure him, by saying that he might be able to cure the pain with dissolvents and ointments, without resorting to the use of the bistoury.

"No, no, sir!" cried the patient; "no plaisters or ointments can give me any relief. I must have the knife. I have come to you to cut out the place which causes me so much suffering."

The doctor asked to see the hand, which the patient held out to him, grinding his teeth, so insufferable appeared to be the pain he was enduring, and with all imaginable precaution he unwound the bandages in which it was enveloped.

"Above all, doctor, I beg of you not to hesitate on account of anything you may see. My disorder is

so strange, that you will be surprised; but do not let that weigh with you."

Doctor K—— reassured the stranger. As



"HE CARRIED HIS RIGHT HAND IN A SLING."

pale face could be discerned traces of great physical and moral sufferings. He carried his right hand in a sling, and, though he tried to restrain himself, he now and then could not prevent a stifled sigh escaping from his lips.



a doctor in practice he was used to see everything, and there was nothing that could surprise him.

What he saw when the hand was freed from its bandages stupefied him nevertheless. Nothing abnormal was to be seen in it—neither wound nor graze; it was a hand like any other. Bewildered, he let it fall from his own.

A cry of pain escaped from the stranger, who raised the afflicted member with his left hand, showing the doctor that he had not come with the intention of mystifying him, and that he was really suffering.

"Where is the sensitive spot?"

"Here, sir," said the stranger, indicating on the back of his hand a point where two large veins crossed, his whole frame trembling when the doctor lightly touched it with the tip of his finger.

"It is here that the burning pain makes itself felt?"

"Abominably!"

"Do you feel the pressure when I place my finger on it?"

The man made no reply, but his eyes filled with tears, so acute was his suffering.

"It is surprising! I can see nothing at that place."

"Nor can I; yet what I feel there is so terrible that at times I am almost driven to dash my head against the wall."

The doctor examined the spot with a magnifying-glass, then shook his head.

"The skin is full of life; the blood within it circulates regularly; there is neither inflammation nor cancer under it; it is as healthy at that spot as elsewhere."

"Yet I think it is a little redder there."

"Where?"

The stranger took a pencil from his pocket book and traced on his hand a ring about the size of a sixpenny-piece, and said:

"It is there."

The doctor looked in his face; he was beginning to believe that his patient's mind was unhinged.

"Remain here," he said, "and in a few days I'll cure you."

"I cannot wait. Don't think that I am a madman, a maniac; it is not in that way that you would cure me. The little circle which I have marked with my pencil causes me internal tortures, and I have come to you to cut it away."

"That I cannot do," said the doctor.

"Why?"

"Because your hand exhibits no pathological disorder. I see at the spot you have

indicated nothing more amiss than on my own hand."

"You really seem to think that I have gone out of my senses, or that I have come here to mock you," said the stranger, taking from his pocket-book a bank-note for a thousand florins, and laying it on the table. "Now, sir, you see that I am not playing off any childish jest, and that the service I seek of you is as urgent as it is important. I beg you to remove this part of my hand."

"I repeat, sir, that for all the treasures in the world you cannot make me regard as unsound a member that is perfectly sound, and still less induce me to cut it with my instruments."

"And why not?"

"Because such an act would cast a doubt upon my medical knowledge and compromise my reputation. Everybody would say that you were mad; that I was dishonest in taking advantage of your condition, or ignorant in not perceiving it."

"Very well. I will only ask a small service of you, then. I am myself capable of making the incision. I shall do it rather clumsily with my left hand; but that does not matter. Be good enough only to bind up the wound after the operation."



"HE TOOK A BISTORY IN HIS LEFT HAND."

It was with astonishment that the doctor saw that this strange man was speaking seriously. He stripped off his coat, turned up the wristbands of his shirt, and took a bistory in his left hand.

A second later, and the steel had made a deep incision in the skin.

"Stay!" cried the doctor, who feared that his patient might, through his awkwardness, sever some important organ. "Since you have determined on the operation, let me perform it."

He took the bistory, and placing in his left hand the right hand of the patient, begged him to turn away his face, the sight of blood being insupportable to many persons.

"Quite needless. On the contrary, it is I who must direct you where to cut."

In fact he watched the operation to the end with the greatest coolness, indicating the limits of the incisions. The open hand did not even quiver in that of the doctor, and when the circular piece was removed, he sighed profoundly, like a man experiencing an enormous relief.

"Nothing burns you now?"

"All has ceased," said the stranger, smiling. "The pain has completely disappeared, as if it had been carried away with the part excised. The little discomfort which the flowing of blood causes me, compared with the other pain, is like a fresh breeze after a blast from the infernal regions. It does me a real good to see my blood pouring forth: let it flow, it does me extreme good."

The stranger watched with an expression of delight the blood pouring from the wound, and the doctor was obliged to insist on binding up the hand.

During the bandaging the aspect of his face completely changed. It no longer bore a dolorous expression, but a look full of good humour was turned upon the doctor. No more contraction of the features, no more despair. A taste for life had returned; the brow was once again calmed; the colour found its way back to the cheeks. The entire man exhibited a complete transformation.

As soon as his hand was laid in the sling he warmly wrung the doctor's hand with the one that remained free, and said cordially:

"Accept my sincere thanks. You have positively cured me. The trifling remuneration I offer you is not at all proportioned to the service you have rendered me: for the rest of my life I shall search for the means of repaying my debt to you."

The doctor would not listen to anything of the kind, and refused to accept the thousand florins placed on the table. On his side the stranger refused to take them back, and, observing that the doctor was losing his temper, begged him to make a present of the money to some hospital, and took his departure.

K—— remained for several days at his town house until the wound in his patient's hand should be cicatrised, which it did without the least accident. During this time the doctor was able to satisfy himself that he had to do with a man of extensive knowledge, reflective, and having very positive opinions in regard to the affairs of life. Besides being rich, he occupied an important official position. Since the taking away of his invisible pain, no trace of moral or physical malady was discoverable in him.

The cure completed, the man returned tranquilly to his residence in the country.

About three weeks had passed when, one morning, at an hour as unduly as before, the servant again announced the strange patient.

The stranger, whom K—— hastened to receive, entered the room with his right hand in a sling, his features convulsed and hardly recognisable from suffering. Without waiting to be invited to sit down, he sank into a chair, and, being unable to master the torture he was enduring, groaned, and without uttering a word, held out his hand to the doctor.

"What has happened?" asked K——, stupefied.

"We have not cut deep enough," replied the stranger, sadly, and in a fainting voice. "It burns me more cruelly than before. I am worn out by it; my arm is stiffened by it. I did not wish to trouble you a second time, and have borne it, hoping that by degrees the invisible inflammation would either mount to my head or descend to my heart, and put an end to my miserable existence; but it has not done so. The pain never goes beyond the spot, but it is indescribable! Look at my face, and you will be able to imagine what it must be!"

The colour of the man's skin was that of wax, and a cold perspiration beaded his forehead. The doctor unbound the bandaged hand. The point operated on was well healed; a new skin had formed, and nothing extraordinary was to be seen. The sufferer's pulse beat quickly, without feverishness, while yet he trembled in every limb.

"This really smacks of the marvellous!" exclaimed the doctor, more and more astonished. "I have never before seen such a case."

"It is a prodigy, a horrible prodigy, doctor. Do not try to find a cause for it, but deliver me from this torment. Take your knife and cut deeper and wider: only that can relieve me."

The doctor was obliged to give in to the prayers of his patient. He performed the operation once again, cutting into the flesh more deeply; and, once more, he saw in the sufferer's face the expression of astonishing relief, the curiosity at seeing the blood flow from the wound, which he had observed on the first occasion.

When the hand was dressed, the deadly pallor passed from the face, the colour returned to the cheeks; but the patient no more smiled. This time he thanked the doctor sadly.

"I thank you, doctor," he said. "The pain has once more left me. In a few days the wound will heal. Do not be astonished, however, to see me return before a month has passed."

"Oh! my dear sir, drive this idea from your mind."

The doctor mentioned this strange case to several of his colleagues, who each held a different opinion in regard to it, without any of them being able to furnish a plausible explanation of its nature.

As the end of the month approached, K—— awaited with anxiety the reappearance of this enigmatic personage. But the month passed and he did not reappear.

Several weeks more went by. At length the doctor received a letter from the sufferer's residence. It was very closely written, and by the signa-

ture he saw that it had been penned by his patient's own hand; from which he concluded that the pain had not returned, for otherwise it would have been very difficult for him to have held a pen.

These are the contents of the letter:—

"Dear doctor, I cannot leave either you or medical science in doubt in regard to the mystery of the strange malady which will shortly carry me to the grave.

"I will here tell you the origin of this terrible malady. For the past week it has returned the third time, and I will no longer struggle with it. At this moment I am only able to write by placing upon the sensitive spot a piece of burning tinder in the form of a poultice. While the tinder is burning I do not feel the other pain; and what distress it causes me is a mere trifle by comparison.

"Six months ago I was still a happy man.



"EVERY DAY APPEARED HAPPIER THAN THE ONE BEFORE IT."



I lived on my income without a care. I was on good terms with everybody, and enjoyed all that is of interest to a man of five-and-thirty. I had married a year before—married for love—a young lady, handsome, with a cultivated mind, and a heart as good as any heart could be, who had been a governess in the house of a countess, a neighbour of mine. She was fortuneless, and attached herself to me, not only from gratitude, but still more from real childish affection. Six months passed, during which every day appeared to be happier than the one which had gone before. If, at times, I was obliged to go to Pesth and quit my own land for a day, my wife had not a moment's rest. She would come two leagues on the way to meet me. If I was detained late, she passed a sleepless night waiting for me; and if by prayers I succeeded in inducing her to go and visit her former mistress, who had not ceased to be extremely fond of her, no power could keep her away from her home for more than half a day; and by her regrets for my absence, she invariably spoiled the good-humour of others. Her tenderness for me went so far as to make her renounce dancing, so as not to be obliged to give her hand to strangers, and nothing more displeased her than gallantries addressed to her. In a word, I had for my wife an innocent girl, who thought of nothing but me, and who confessed to me her dreams as enormous crimes, if they were not of me.

"I know not what demon one day whispered in my ear: Suppose that all this were dissimulation? Men are mad enough to seek torments in the midst of their greatest happiness.

"My wife had a work-table, the drawer of which she carefully locked. I had noticed this several times. She never forgot the key, and never left the drawer open.

"That question haunted my mind. What could she be hiding there? I had become mad. I no longer believed either in the innocence of her face or the purity of her looks, nor in her caresses, nor in her kisses. What if all that were hypocrisy?

"One morning the countess came anew to invite her to her house, and, after much pressing, succeeded in inducing her to go and spend the day with her. Our estates were some leagues from each other, and I promised to join my wife in the course of a few hours.

"As soon as the carriage had quitted the courtyard, I collected all the keys in the house and tried them on the lock of the little drawer. One of them opened it. I felt like a man committing his first crime. I was a thief about to surprise the secrets of my poor wife. My hands trembled as I carefully pulled out the drawer, and, one by one, turned over the objects within it, so that no derangement of them might betray the fact of a strange hand having disturbed them. My bosom was oppressed; I was almost stifled. Suddenly—under some lace—I put my hand upon a packet of letters.

It was as if a flash of lightning had passed through me from my head to my heart. Oh! they were the sort of letters one recognises at a glance—love letters!

"The packet was tied with a rose-coloured ribbon, edged with silver.

"As I touched that ribbon this thought came into my mind: Is it conceivable?—is this the work of an

honest man? To steal the secrets of his wife!—secrets belonging to the time when she was a young girl. Have I any right to exact from her a reckoning for thoughts she may have had before she belonged to me? Have I any right to be jealous of a time when I was unknown to her? Who could suspect her of a fault? Who? I



"I FELT LIKE A MAN COMMITTING HIS FIRST CRIME."

am guilty for having suspected her. The demon again whispered in my ears: 'But what if these letters date from a time when you already had a right to know all her thoughts, when you might already be jealous of her dreams, when she was already yours?' I unfastened the ribbon. Nobody saw me. There was not even a mirror to

what I felt? Imagine the intoxication caused by a mortal poison. I read all those letters—every one. Then I put them up again in a packet, retied them with the ribbon, and, replacing them under the lace, relocked the drawer.

"I knew that if she did not see me by noon she would return in the evening from



'SHE KISSED ME WITH EXCESSIVE TENDERNESS.'

make me blush for myself. I opened one letter, then another, and I read them to the end.

"Oh, it was a terrible hour for me!

"What was there in these letters? The vilest treason of which a man has ever been the victim. The writer of these letters was one of my intimate friends! And the tone in which they were written!—what passion, what love, certain of being returned! How he spoke of 'keeping the secret!' And all these letters dated at a time when I was married and so happy! How can I tell you

her visit to the countess—as she did. She descended from the *calèche* hurriedly, to rush towards me as I stood awaiting her on the steps. She kissed me with excessive tenderness, and appeared extremely happy to be once again with me. I allowed nothing of what was passing within me to appear in my face. We conversed, we supped together, and each retired to our bed-rooms. I did not close an eye. Broad awake, I counted all the hours. When the clock struck the first quarter after midnight, I rose and entered her room. The beautiful

fair head was there pressed into the white pillows—as angels are painted in the midst of snowy clouds. What a frightful lie of nature's is vice under an aspect so innocent! I was resolved, with the headlong wilfulness of a madman, haunted by a fixed idea. The poison had completely corroded my soul. I resolved to kill her as she lay.

"I pass over the details of the crime. She died without offering the least resistance, as tranquilly as one goes to sleep. She was never irritated against me—even when I killed her. One single drop of blood fell on the back of my hand—you know where. I did not perceive it until the next day, when it was dry.

"We buried her without anybody suspecting the truth. I lived in solitude. Who could have controlled my actions? She had neither parent nor guardian who could have addressed to me any questions on the subject, and I designedly put off sending the customary invitations to the funeral, so that my friends could not arrive in time.

"On returning from the vault I felt not the least weight upon my conscience. I had been cruel, but she had deserved it. I would not hate her—I would forget her. I scarcely thought of her. Never did a man commit an assassination with less remorse than I.

"The countess, so often mentioned, was at the *château* when I returned there. My measures had been so well taken that she also had arrived too late for the interment. On seeing me she appeared greatly agitated. Terror, sympathy, sorrow, or, I know not what, had put so much into her words that I could not understand what she was saying to console me.

"Was I even listening to her? Had I any need of consolation? I was not sad. At last she took me familiarly by the hand, and, dropping her voice, said that she was obliged to confide a secret to me, and that she relied on my honour as a gentleman not to abuse it. She had given my wife a packet of letters to mind, not having been able to keep them in her own house; and these

letters she now requested me to return to her. While she was speaking, I several times felt a shudder run through my frame. With seeming coolness, however, I questioned her as to the contents of the letters. At this interrogation the lady started, and replied angrily:—

"Sir, your wife has been more generous than you! When she took charge of *my* letters, she did not demand to know what they contained. She even gave me her promise that she would never set eyes on them, and I am convinced that she never read a line of any one of them. She had a noble heart, and would have been ashamed to forfeit the pledge she had given.'

"Very well,' I replied. 'How shall I recognise this packet?'

"It was tied with a rose-coloured ribbon edged with silver.'

"I will go and search for it.'

"I took my wife's keys, knowing perfectly well where I should find the packet; but I pretended to find it with much difficulty.

"Is this it?' I asked the countess, handing it to her.

"Yes, yes—that is it! See!—the knot I myself made has never been touched.'

"I dared not raise my eyes to hers; I feared lest she should read in them that I



"IS THIS IT?"



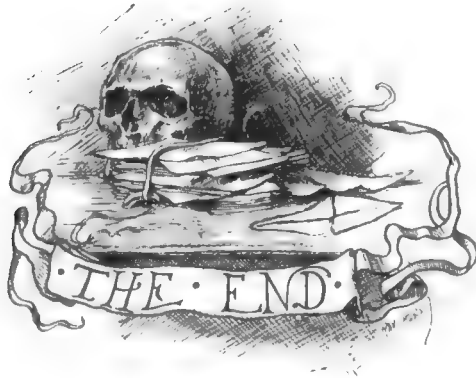
had untied the knot of that packet, and something more.

"I took leave of her abruptly ; she sprang into her carriage and drove off.

"The drop of blood had disappeared, the pain was not manifested by any external symptom ; and yet the spot marked by the drop burned me as if it had been bitten by a corrosive poison. This pain grows from hour to hour. I sleep sometimes, but I never cease to be conscious of my suffering. I do not complain to anybody : nobody, indeed, would believe my story. You have seen the violence of my torment, and you know how much the two operations have relieved me ; but concurrently with the healing of the wound, the pain returns. It

has now attacked me for the third time, and I have no longer strength to resist it. In an hour I shall be dead. One thought consoles me ; it is that she has avenged herself here below. She will perhaps forgive me above. I thank you for all you have done for me. May heaven reward you."

A few days later one might have read in the newspapers that S——, one of the richest landowners, had blown out his brains. Some attributed his suicide to sorrow caused by the death of his wife ; others, better informed, to an incurable wound. Those who best knew him said that he had been attacked by monomania, that his incurable wound existed only in his imagination.



## The Queer Side of Things.

# MOOZEBY

BY J. F. SULLIVAN.

**L**T was just the day for a picnic, fine and balmy, and discounted by no probability of rain and hurricane; in fact, we had had a long spell of settled weather—nearly a day and a half—so we were all in good spirits.

We had selected a beautiful landing-place on the bank of the Thames, and had the additional advantage of the shadow of a large notice-board—a board declaring the land, river, air, sky, clouds, and other articles around and above, to be the private property of someone or other, and warning strangers not to land, fish, breathe, exist, or otherwise trespass near the spot. The shadow of this board served nicely to keep the rays of the sun from the butter and champagne. We only regretted that Moozeby had not been able to join us.

We were preparing to sit down to our repast, when Pinniger, looking toward the "table," expressed a fear that a mist was rising from the ground just at that spot. It really seemed so, although the place we had chosen for laying the cloth on had been selected on account of its apparent dryness. Yet there *was* a small patch of mist, rapidly increasing in density; so, deciding that there must be a small morass just there, we prepared to move the eatables to another place.

Pinniger thereupon stretched forth his hand to seize the dish of lobsters, and withdrew it with a strange expression of face; he examined his hand: "It's the densest mist I ever came across!" he muttered; "I can *feel* it—feels like cotton-wool!"

Then Maud Wimble—Pinniger's affianced—tried to reach the pie, and drew back *her* hand with a little shriek. "What is it?" she cried in a scared way; "I don't like it! I can hardly get my hand through

it! Look, look! It seems to have a shape!"

We had turned green now, and were standing in a ring, staring open-mouthed at the patch of fog. It *did* seem to have a shape certainly.

Joe Button, who was a stolid, heavy fellow, without any nerves, had another try at it; he tried to get at the butter, and did succeed in getting the point of a finger some little way in, but drew it back hastily



and turned green like the rest of us ; for he and we could have sworn that we heard a sort of far-off voice crying, from the midst of that fog : " Here, I say ! A joke's a joke—that hurts ! "

Utterly paralysed, we stood watching that lump of fog. It was momentarily becoming more opaque, and more and more of the form of a man ; then the form became rapidly clearer and clearer—until at length there sat Moozeby, solid and alive, on the viands.

" It's all right—don't be alarmed, any of you," panted Moozeby, wiping his brow as if after some great exertion ; " there's no-



" THERE SAT MOOZEBY—ON THE VIANDS."

thing supernatural—I've only precipitated myself—been taking lessons in it. But, by Jove, where *have* I landed—Why—oh, I say, I'm awfully sorry ! "

With this he got up from the provisions, the greater part of which were ruined ; he had been sitting on the pie, the butter, the salad, the coffee-cream, the salmon, and the tarts. We upbraided him wildly.

" I say, I'm awfully sorry ! " he said, humbly, " *awfully* sorry. The fact is, it's very difficult to aim properly when you're a beginner. You see, it's this way—when you're distributed in the air in the form of elements, it affects the sight to a great extent ; and you really cannot see exactly where you are focussing yourself. You know, I could distinguish the group of you here in a vague way, and recognise you by your voices ; but I was under the impression that I was precipitating my-

self on that tree-stump there, see ? I really hadn't the faintest idea I was among the eatables—wouldn't have played a trick like that for the world ! You know me."

We did know him for a good fellow, with a mind above jokes of that sort ; so we forgave him.

" But, now, what the dickens are we going to do for grub ? " we said.

" I'll tell you what," said Moozeby, " I'll take the Canadian, and paddle to Sonning, and get something. Won't be ten min—"

" I say, Bob, if you can precipitate yourself, what's to prevent you trying your hand at other things—raised pies and things ? "

" Gad, I never thought of that ! " exclaimed Moozeby.

" I wouldn't eat such nasty, unwholesome, supernatural things, for one ! " said Mrs. Wimbledon, shuddering ; and we all had some such feeling.

" Well, anyhow, it won't do any harm to try. Tell you what, I'll try on a sandwich, and taste it myself," said Moozeby. " Just help me wish for it, all you fellows ; it might be an assistance."

Fixing his eye steadfastly on the top of Wortleworth's head, so that his attention should not wander, Moozeby stood perfectly still, grunting at intervals, as if engaged in a tiring effort. In a few moments a little patch of mist appeared over Wortleworth's head, and, in another few moments, there lay a freshly-cut sandwich, right on the bald patch.



" A LITTLE PATCH OF MIST APPEARED OVER WORTLEWORTH'S HEAD."

"Oh, I beg pardon—didn't mean it to come there!" explained Moozeby. He took the sandwich; we all smelt it suspiciously, and Moozeby nibbled a little corner of it.

"Upon my word, it isn't half bad!" he said. "It's ham—not American, I'll swear. It's remarkably good. I'll finish it, and chance it."

"Precipitate a dish of 'em, Bob; it won't be any bigger effort to do a whole dish than a single one, will it?"

He did it. We each took one, very nervously and delicately—with the exception of Mrs. Wimbledon—and turned it over, and smelt it. Each sandwich was beautifully buttered and seasoned, and



"MRS. WIMBLEDON SHUDDERED."

looked most tempting. A notion occurred to us: we offered one to Tim, the Irish terrier, and *he* swallowed it, unhesitatingly, and did not die in a paroxysm, or catch fire; on the contrary, he licked his lips. We nibbled a corner; we ate those sandwiches, with the exception of Mrs. Wimbledon, who declared it was wicked, and a "tempting of Providence" (whatever that may be), and shuddered again.

"Go it, Bob, old man!" we cried in chorus. "Let's have some nice things—galantines, and so on."

"Well, I'll tell you what," said Moozeby, "let's make out a list—a race-hamper list—before I go to work. It'll be one effort for the lot."

"Yes, better order 'em all at once——"

"Ssh! Don't speak of it as 'ordering,' old chap. Mrs. Besant wouldn't like it if she heard; and there's no knowing if she does," said Moozeby.

The affair was a great success. We laid out a clean white cloth on the burdens of the boat, and Moozeby precipitated on to it a very choice and varied collation. There were minor blunders: he omitted to precipitate a dish for the mayonnaise. The wine was excellent—not at all like any one gets from a wine merchant; and the cigars had not that aroma of guano characterising those we obtain from Havana.

Beyond this, the new way of providing things was remarkably economical; and we all decided to lay in a large stock of wine for home use in that way. It is very strange to reflect that this useful power, exercised with so great facility by H. P. B. and our friend Moozeby, should have been so long neglected by civilised men! The more one thinks upon it the stranger it seems.

Presently it came on to rain, and Moozeby precipitated umbrellas and waterproofs. He was invaluable: no picnic is complete without a Moozeby. Nevertheless, these articles were not such a complete success as the viands; some of them hovered an unreasonable time in a nebulous condition, and one umbrella really only became solid in parts, and let the rain through the misty portions on to Pinniger and his young lady; but we arrived at the station in good spirits—to find our last train gone!

On inquiry, we discovered that we could, by waiting an hour and twenty minutes, get home towards morning by changing at Clapham-junction, Willes-



"THE LAST TRAIN GONE!"

den, and Loughborough-park. We were in dismay, when Pinniger was struck with a thought—

"Why couldn't you precipitate a special train, Bob?" he said to Moozeby.

Poor Moozeby looked fagged out, and said, "Fact is, I don't feel over fresh after precipitating all those other things. It's a bit of a strain; and a train's a big thing to undertake late in the day—the engine alone will take a lot out of me; but I'll do my best."

Accordingly, poor Moozeby, after a sip of brandy, went and fixed his eyes steadily on the line, while we all stood round, staring eagerly at the same point. The station-master, thinking something must be wrong, came up and asked if we had lost anything. "Sh!" whispered Pinniger hoarsely; "don't distract his attention—you'll spoil it."

So the station-master and the porters, and young W. H. Smith & Sons silently joined the group, and stared at the line too. A quarter of an hour elapsed, and then a grey vapour began to gather on the line, wavering uncertainly; for fully another twenty minutes it wavered and varied in density, and then the station-master began to grow anxious.

"Beg pardon—don't want to spoil the experiment, whatever it may be," he whispered. "But it won't do to interfere with the line in any way—it's against all rules."

It became obvious that we must let the station-master into it; to attempt to work a thing on so large a scale without taking him into the affair seemed positively rude; besides which, he might be able to assist Moozeby with hints as to the proper construction of a train. So we explained the matter to him.

The station-master shook his head decisively, and said it was against rules for strangers to place trains on the line; it was obviously to the common danger, par-

ticularly as the up express was due in twelve minutes.

This was serious; we advised Moozeby to run his nebula on to a siding out of danger, and go on with it there—if we could persuade the station-master to sanction it.

But Moozeby was very tired, and got flurried over it; he found that the half-solid train would not move, the engine not yet having arrived at a working condition, so he hastily attempted to precipitate a horse to drag it into the siding; but the horse behaved in a foolish manner, too, and finally took form with only three legs, one of *them* being filmy. Our nervousness and excitement grew intense—the express was signalled as having passed a point three miles away, and would be upon us almost

immediately; in our despair we jumped down on the line, and put our shoulders to such half-solid portions of Moozeby's train as we could find—but our exertions only made a jumbled mass of it, owing to the nebulous parts giving way; the rumble of the approaching express grew momentarily louder; the station-master and the porters and young W. H. Smith shrieked to us to come off the line; we scrambled madly on to the platform, yelling

to Moozeby to dissolve his train as sharp as he could; Moozeby gasped and made one mighty effort; the express came thundering through the arch a hundred yards away; the station-master and porters and young Smith were nearly mad, and tried frantically to poke away the lumps of Moozeby's train with some poles.

The express dashed by, scattering the pieces of train in all directions, and whirled away out of sight.

Lumps of the scattered train were falling about us in every direction, some of them upon our heads; but they were so light that an umbrella easily kept them off: and we breathed again, for the express had escaped undamaged.



"MOOZEBY FIXED HIS EYES STEADILY ON THE LINE."





"THE EXPRESS DASHED BY."

The anger of the station-master was terrible, and he was at first about to give us all in charge; but we soothed him after a time, and Moozeby precipitated a diamond scarf-pin into his tie; and we shook hands with him, and trudged off towards the village to get beds.

Our path lay by the side of the line; and, when about a quarter of a mile from the station, we came upon a nice quiet siding, and Pinniger glanced at Moozeby.

"All right," said Moozeby, who had refreshed himself after his recent strain with half a bottle of champagne and the breast of a fowl; "I don't feel so tired as I did, and I fancy I might get on better now. I was flurried before."

This time he went to work more methodically. We all sat down on the waterproofs and the men smoked, while Moozeby commenced at the engine, to make sure of that at any rate. We had decided to limit ourselves to an engine and one carriage, to save Moozeby as much as possible.

But Moozeby wasted time and strength to begin with; for, knowing but little about engines, he half-precipitated a pumping engine, having, as Pinniger remarked, probably only ordered "an engine," without stating on the order-form the kind of engine required.

However, Moozeby tried again, and presently we had the consolation

of seeing a magnificent compound, leading - bogie, four - coupled locomotive gradually assuming shape; Moozeby was a little irritated on seeing this, as such a powerful engine was a waste of his strength, but he went on with it; and at length he declared it finished.

Still it didn't look quite right—there were parts through which you could pass the hand, which we were all convinced was not the case in an ordinary manufactured engine—however, we were glad to get anything.

Then Moozeby went to work at the carriage, but that came very, very slowly, for he was getting exhausted; and when it did appear he did not seem able to consolidate it properly. It would not set. There it was, however, and Thripling stepped into it; but the next moment we heard angry words coming from underneath it, and it turned out that Thripling had fallen through a part of the floor which had not set, on to the permanent way.

Then Moozeby got in and finished the precipitation of the floor of one compartment, and we all crowded into that; but presently Maud Wimble felt the part she was on getting nebulous again, and *she* found herself standing on the ground with her head and shoulders in the carriage. However, Moozeby patched it up again for the time.

Then we remembered that none of us could drive an engine, and poor Moozeby had



"AN ENGINE-DRIVER AT LAST."

to collect himself once more to precipitate a driver ; and here again he forgot to describe the particular kind of driver, owing to which he found he had precipitated a pig-driver, who was helplessly intoxicated into the bargain ; but he did precipitate an engine-driver at last, who set fairly well, except part of one leg, which remained cloudy, so that the man had to move about by hopping.

Then we finally got in and waited breathlessly for the train to move. It *did* move ! Very slowly, strangely, and creakily, showing that there was *something* wrong ; however, that did not matter so long as we could get home somehow. We requested the driver not to drive fast and recklessly ; and he replied that he was not likely to, with parts of the boiler like flannel, and requiring to be tied round with string to prevent it bursting.

That train never set properly ; every two or three minutes some part or other of it would become nebulous again, the whole requiring incessant attention on the part of Moozeby who was getting thoroughly knocked up, and was losing his power.

Once the driver's body and legs became a cloud ; and he called out to us that he couldn't undertake to drive in that con-

dition ; then the end of the carriage vanished suddenly into air, letting down a row of us on to the permanent way, and bruising us considerably. We were anything but comfortable, for we had to keep a very sharp look-out for trains which frequently came by ; and on these occasions Moozeby would have to make a wild effort and precipitate, in all haste, a siding for us to run on to, until the other train had passed.

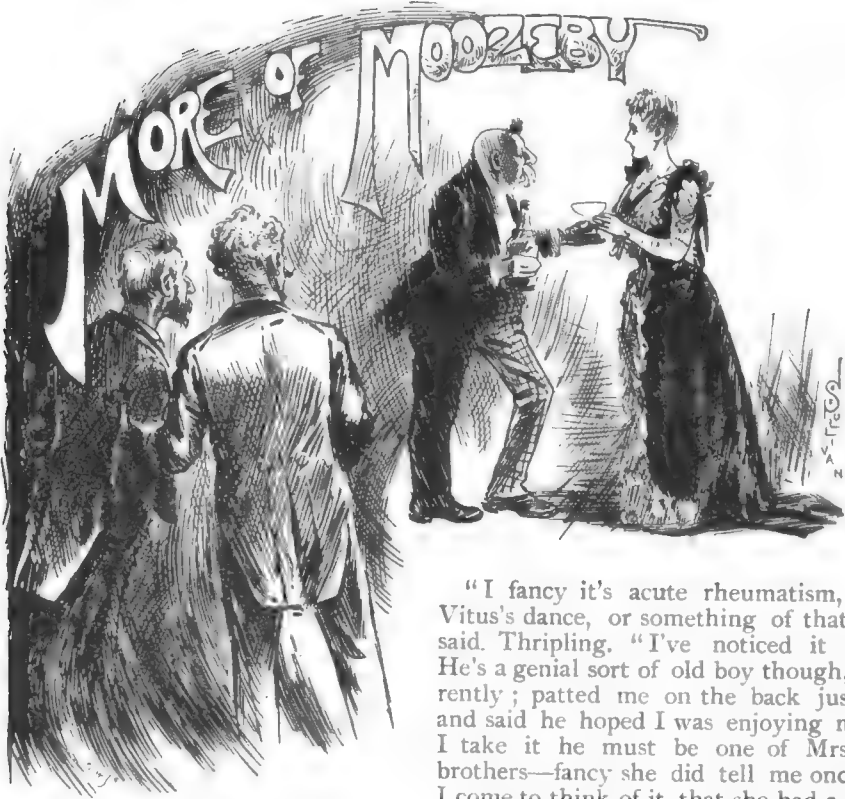
At length Moozeby could be kept awake no longer, in spite of all we could do by pinching and running pins into him ; and the carriage, engine, and driver suddenly became soft—nebulous—air ; leaving us on the permanent way, many miles from London, at two in the morning.

We were dreadfully angry with poor Moozeby at the time—unreasonably so, when one considers how much he had done for us ; for after all said and done Moozeby is a very good fellow at heart, and his accomplishment remarkably useful at times, particularly when he is fresh and his precipitations will set properly.

It is foolish to attempt such a thing as a train, when one is tired ; and, besides, it brings discredit on theosophy, and makes the uninitiated incredulous about it.



## The Queer Side of Things.



**S**INCE poor Moozeby tried those experiments in precipitating trains and things, he has kept up his studies in Theosophy; but the results have not been at all encouraging.

We were all at Mrs. Moozeby's reception, and we all knew one another more or less, with the exception of one man who was a stranger to all of us. We could not help noticing him; for, besides being new to us all, his appearance and manner were rather remarkable.

"Who's that old boy?" said Pinniger to Thripling. "I never saw such a queer fish in my life. He seems to move about so awkwardly, as if he hadn't the proper use of his limbs."

"I fancy it's acute rheumatism, or St. Vitus's dance, or something of that sort," said Thripling. "I've noticed it myself. He's a genial sort of old boy though, apparently; patted me on the back just now, and said he hoped I was enjoying myself! I take it he must be one of Mrs. M.'s brothers—fancy she did tell me once, now I come to think of it, that she had a matter of a brother or two in Australia. He must be some relation, or he would hardly make himself quite so much at home, would he?"

"Tell you what," said Pinniger presently, "that old fellow is a regular study. The way he gets about is really lovely—like a crab on crutches. And his voice is so queer; every now and then it breaks and becomes a squeak, and at other times he seems to be trying to imitate Moozeby: in fact, now I come to think of it, his accent is very much like Moozeby's. I have it—he's a relation of Moozeby's, not Mrs. M.'s; there is a sort of family likeness all round. Never heard that Moozeby had a brother, but he may be a first cousin or something."

At this moment Mrs. Moozeby came up and whispered to Pinniger, "Do you know who that gentleman is? I thought he must

be a friend of Mrs. Wimbledon's; but she says she never saw him before in her life. Who has brought him? And I wonder why they didn't introduce him to me, or anything?"

Pinniger and Thripling shook their heads hopelessly.

"I don't at all like his manners!" continued Mrs. Moozeby. "He goes about as if my house belonged to him, and offers people wine and things! Just now, I do believe, he went down into the cellar and fetched up more champagne; and he addresses me as 'My dear' and 'My love'! I do wish my husband would come home! Look! look! He has actually had the impertinence to go up and fetch baby out of bed! I *won't* have it! It's *too* much! I don't care who brought him, I shall go and ask him what he means by it all!"

"It's all right, my love," said the stranger, tossing the baby up. "I'm sure baby's had a good sleep, and he wants to see the company. Don't you, Toddlums?"

"Actually knows baby's pet name!" exclaimed Mrs. Moozeby. "I have not the pleasure of knowing who you are, sir; but I consider that you are taking very great liberties in my house, and I must ask you to behave yourself if you remain here. Pray, who brought you here?"

The stranger stared a little at this speech, and then broke into a laugh of great enjoyment, though still with something of puzzlement in it.



"KITCHEE! KITCHEE!"

"Kitchee! kitchee!" he said between his chuckles.

"Mummy's funny, isn't she, Toddlums? Funny, wunny, wee! Fun-ny, wun-ny, widdle-de, wee!"

The infant seemed to enjoy the joke intensely, and laid a slobbery finger on the stranger's nose; but Mrs. Moozeby indig-

nantly snatched it away, and hurried with it upstairs, exclaiming at every step, "Of all the impertinence!" "To think of it!" "Well!"

"Very extraordinary!" exclaimed the stranger. "What in the name of heaven

can have put her out? Never saw her in such a tantrum." And he rushed upstairs after her; then there came a scream from above, and we hurried up, to find Mrs. M. at bay in a corner, with the baby in a safe position behind her, stamping her foot at the stranger and pouring forth volumes of wild indignation.

The stranger stood in the middle of the room scratching his head in a perplexed way, and occasionally exclaiming "My love!" and "Tut, tut!"



"IN A SAFE POSITION."

"Gad!" said Pinniger, "mad! Better send for a policeman."

"I do believe she *is* mad," said the stranger. "But I don't think a policeman would know what to do. Aren't burnt feathers, or smelling salts, or arnica, or something like that, good for this sort of thing?"

"Oh, *why* doesn't Mr. Moozeby come home?" cried Mrs. M., beating an angry tattoo with her shoe.

The stranger gazed at us and shook his head. "Mad!" he murmured; then he said, "My love, don't you know me?"

"No," cried Mrs. Moozeby, "I do not; and what is more, whoever had the impertinence to bring you here shall never enter this house again!"

"I do hope she won't take to tearing baby limb from limb," said the stranger ner-

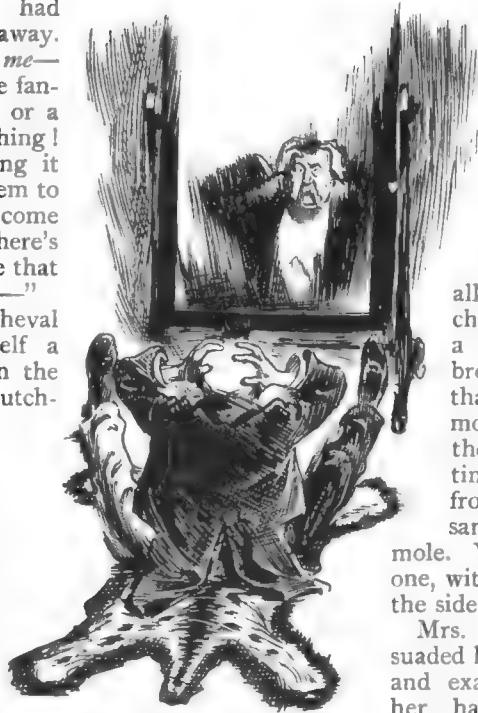
vously ; "I think I had better try to get it away. If she doesn't know *me*—her husband—she'll be fancying baby is a rat, or a blackbeetle, or something! Kitchee, kitchee. Hang it—you fellows don't seem to know me! What's come to me? I do believe there's a something about me that—which—that isn't—"

He rushed to the cheval glass, gazed at himself a moment, then sank on the floor with his hands clutching at his hair.

"I've muddled it somehow!" he whispered to himself.

"It's all right," said Pinniger, soothingly, advancing with a Japanese fan he had hastily snatched up, and waving it gently before the stranger, to amuse and quiet him. "There's a nice cab coming to fetch you, and a man with nice, bright buttons all down his coat. So nice! Be here in a minute, if you sit nice and still."

"Pinniger, my dear fellow, don't!" said the stranger. "Can't you see I'm—no, I suppose you can't; but I *am*—Moozeby. I've been precipitating myself, and somehow muddled it. You see, I was anxious to get home here quickly from the City so as to receive the people; but I missed my train, so I found a nice quiet spot in the Temple Gardens and elementalised myself, so that I might re-precipitate myself here at once; but somehow (I fancy I was thinking of a business acquaintance whom I had just left at the bottom of Ludgate-hill) I muddled it, and mixed myself up somehow, and I seem to have come out something like him here and there. You see—yes—he has a little bit of hair right in the middle of his forehead, and here it is; and this is his heavy moustache; and

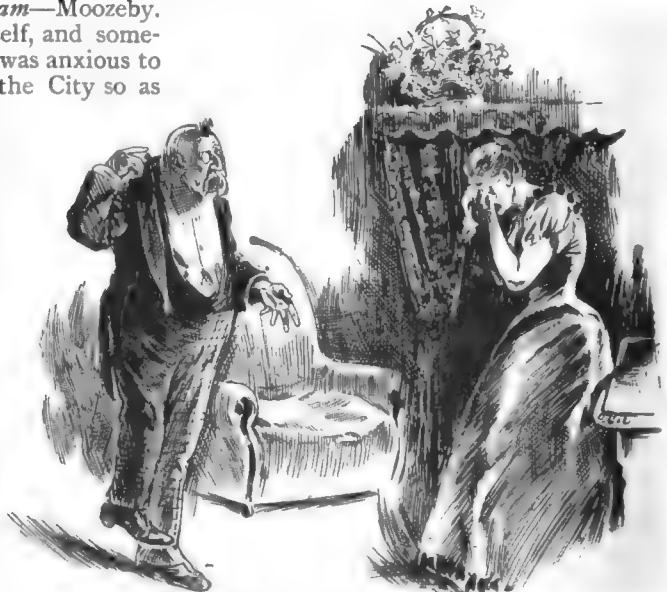


"CLUTCHING AT HIS HAIR."

his legs are much longer than mine, and I seem to have one of his and one of my own, and two different kinds of boots, too. Dear, dear! But look here, this mole at the back of my neck, that *is* mine. Look, my love, see? Mole! It's all right. I must really be chiefly myself, speaking in a general way and on broad lines, while I have that mole. Where that mole is I am; because they always used to distinguish me, as a baby, from other babies of the same size, by means of that mole. Yes, here it is; the large one, with the little tiny one by the side of it, for luck."

Mrs. Moozeby at length persuaded herself to approach him, and examine the mole; then her harrowed feelings found relief in sobs.

"I wish you had never seen those hateful Mahatma books, 'Hysteric Buddhism,' and the rest of them!" she said. "As if you had not quite enough irritating habits before, Robert! And now



"HER HARROWED FEELINGS FOUND RELIEF."



there's always this precipitating business going on ; and I always told you it was bad for your health, especially your digestion, which was always delicate, besides being wicked and flying in the face of Providence ! And *now* just see what you've done—mixed yourself up like this so that nobody can recognise you ; and a nice job for Doctor Coddles to get you right again ! And then that hateful moustache—very nice to be set against one's meals by festoons of soup and mayonnaise hanging to it ! You'll have the kindness, at least, to shave *that* off at once."

"I—really, my dear, I hardly like to. The fact is, I don't feel as if it were altogether my own property. You see, if I returned the other parts to Mownde—that's that business acquaintance, my dear—without the moustache, he mightn't altogether like—but, then, after all, I suppose this one is only a duplicate of his, and he's all right and complete as it is, and knows nothing about it. Oh, dear, it *is* puzzling ; I don't quite understand all the bearings of the thing yet——"

"No," said Mrs. Moozeby. "And it will come to having to keep an inventory of yourself, and go through it every morning to see if you are all there ; a nice waste of time, and pretty late it will make you for town ! Besides, the untidiness of leaving pieces of yourself all about in different places ! I'm sure George and Mary have quite enough work as it is, folding up your clothes that you throw all over the place ; and then what a nice example for baby to grow up with before its eyes ! How can you expect the servants to be tidy, and put things away, with you for ever asking where your legs

are, or whether anyone has seen your nose ? I'm sure if these hateful Mahatmas had to manage a house themselves, they would have thought twice before inventing this detestable nonsense !"

Altogether that reception of Mrs. Moozeby's was a failure, and we all left early ; for we could not feel that Moozeby, in his existing state, was a proper substitute for himself ; and it was difficult to regard him as our host. It is true that the poor fellow did his very best to pull himself together and try to make us at home ; he came down and tried to get up some extempore *tableaux vivants*, but we could perceive that he was tired and out of sorts—in fact,

he experienced a great deal of pain in the leg which was not one of his own, and came to the conclusion that that business acquaintance of his must suffer badly from gout or rheumatism, and we thought it would be a relief to him if we all went away.

Next day, being rather anxious about poor Moozeby, I called for Pinniger, and we went together to see how he was getting on. We found him at home as we had expected ; for, as he said, it would not be of much use to go to town, as neither the clerks nor anyone else would recognise him ; besides which, he had a morbid sensitiveness about venturing out and showing himself, being jerky and spasmodic in his movements in consequence of a difficulty in working the parts which were not his own, and which re-



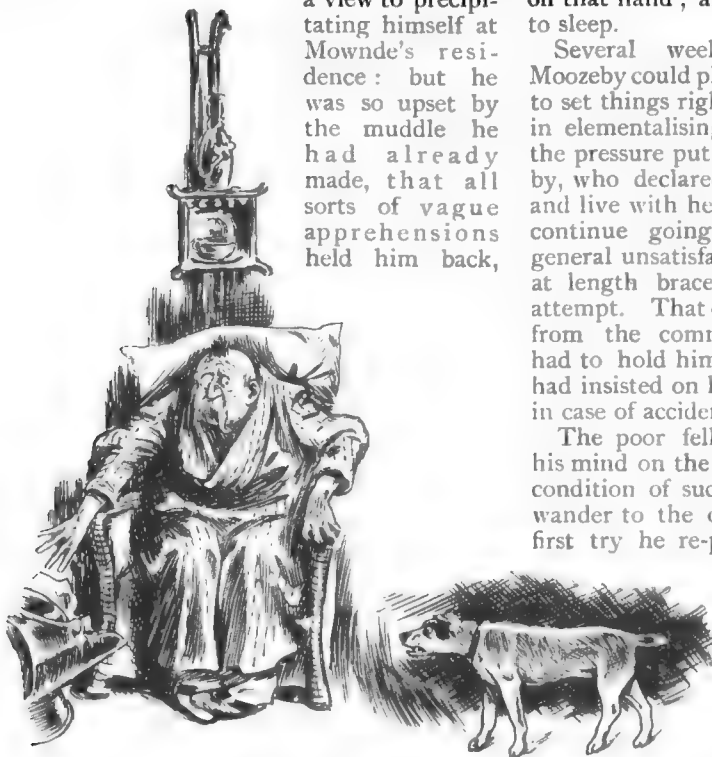
"WHERE IS MY LEG ? HAS ANYBODY SEEN MY NOSE ?"

quired practice to get used to.

He was very miserable, poor fellow ; among other things, he had developed a violent cold in his nose—or rather, in his business acquaintance's nose. He recollected having noticed Mownde standing in

a violent draught in town, and warning him against taking cold ; and evidently he had taken cold. Then there was another thing—Moozeby's right hand, which was Mownde's, would keep taking out his watch and holding it up to be looked at, which convinced Moozeby that Mownde had some important engagement that morning ; and Moozeby's misery was increased by the uncertainty whether Mownde was really complete in himself, or whether he was waiting for the missing parts before he could keep his appointment.

Poor Moozeby was fearfully perplexed how to act for the best. Several times he was tempted to elementalise himself, with a view to precipitating himself at Mownde's residence : but he was so upset by the muddle he had already made, that all sorts of vague apprehensions held him back,



"MOOZEBY AND HIS FOX-TERRIER."

one of them being that he might lose Mownde's pieces irrecoverably on the way, thus doing irreparable harm.

The worst of it was, Moozeby's fox-terrier would spend his whole time in walking round and round Moozeby on the tips of his paws, and with his legs rigid like those of an automaton, and growling ; and the possibility of his deciding on a bite was increased by Mownde's intense aversion to dogs, which caused Moozeby's right hand

(in the intervals of taking out the watch) to seize all sorts of objects with the purpose of flinging them at the dog. As this would be absolutely certain to precipitate the threatened attack, Moozeby was forced to keep incessantly on the watch for the vagaries of that hand, which would occasionally (being very quick) seize a lump of coal or something while Moozeby's eye was turned away, and all but succeed in hurling it. Then that hand of Mownde's had a nasty twitch in it—some sort of paralysis—and would, every now and then, pinch Moozeby's ear, or pull his whiskers, causing him to grunt with pain. At length he settled matters for the time by sitting on that hand ; and presently the dog went to sleep.

Several weeks passed before poor Moozeby could pluck up courage to attempt to set things right by a further experiment in elementalising himself ; but, what with the pressure put upon him by Mrs. Moozeby, who declared her determination to go and live with her mother if he intended to continue going about *that* guy, and the general unsatisfactory state of the case, he at length braced up his nerves to the attempt. That dog resented the operations from the commencement, and Pinniger had to hold him back ; and Mrs. Moozeby had insisted on having Dr. Coddles present in case of accidents.


The poor fellow could not concentrate his mind on the operation, a most essential condition of success. His thoughts *would* wander to the objects he saw ; and at the first try he re-precipitated himself fairly all right, with the exception of the right leg, which was the leg of a table—a *facsimile* of those supporting the dining table in front of him. Then, while he was trying to concentrate his thoughts on that leg, the rest of him

grew nebulous, and faded right away ; and we feared the worst. But his voice, apparently from the centre of the earth, murmured : "All right, you fellows, I'm all here in the form of air ; only I wish you would put a newspaper or something in front of the fire to prevent some of me being drawn up the chimney by the draught."

We waited breathlessly for a quarter of an hour, then we heard Moozeby's voice

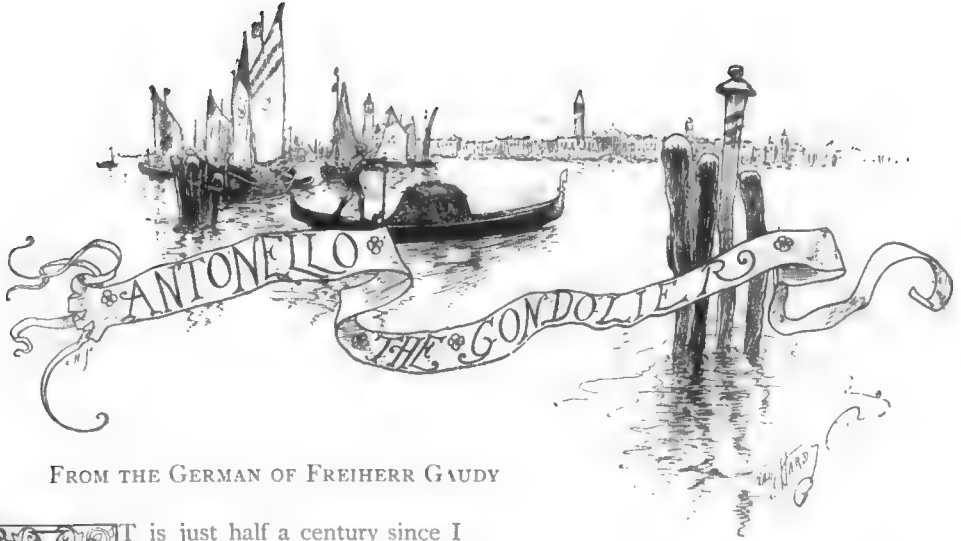


saying: "I say, just get down that book, 'Every Man his own Mahatma.' I think it's in that little bookcase by the window. That's it. Now, just turn to page 392, where it tells you how to unravel your elements when you've got 'em in a tangle. Thanks."


 A black and white illustration showing a man's head and shoulders in profile, looking towards a small bookshelf. On the shelf, there is a round object, possibly a clock or a decorative jar, and a book is visible behind it. The man has curly hair and is looking intently at the shelf.



"SHE DISCOURSED SWEET MUSIC."  
(ANTONELLO, THE GONDOLIER.)



FROM THE GERMAN OF FREIHERR GAUDY

**I**T is just half a century since I closed the eyes of my good father—the best of comrades, the fondest of husbands, the most honest Venetian of his time. Ah, if you had known my father, you would have acknowledged him the hardest, boldest fellow in the Republic, the cleverest mandolin-player, the best singer of Tasso, the smartest gondolier whose oars ever lashed to foam the waters of the Canalazzo. All this must be my excuse for rescuing from the oblivion of the fleeting years the fragment of his life I now relate.

My father felt his end approaching. With closed eyes he lay on a couch stuffed with maize-straw, a rosary in his wrinkled hands, and his pale lips moving in silent prayer. A death-like stillness filled the room, broken only by the sobs of wife and children. The rays of the evening sun burst through the vine-espalier that grew round our home; and over the face of the dying passed now patches of rosy light, and now the shadows of the broad leaves. Presently he opened the large, black, deeply-sunken eyes once more, looked slowly round as if to make sure that we were all there, and then began wearily and with difficulty to speak.

“For years, now,” he said, “I have been wanting to make you the confidants of a strange, almost incredible, event which happened to me in my youth. I put it off from

day to day, for one reason or another—but I put it off too long. Now, I know not whether the time that is left me suffices for the telling of this long-guarded secret. Listen, however—but first swear on this dying hand that no word of the secret shall pass your lips till fifty years have gone. The heir of a great and powerful family has been involved in the destiny of so humble a man as myself—and the Tribunal of the Inquisition was compelled to intervene. An unguarded word may expose you to the vengeance of an undisciplined and powerful nobility, or to the severity of the legal authorities. Swear, therefore, a silence of fifty years!”

We obeyed the last command of our father; we laid our hands in his, and pronounced the binding oath. We have kept it faithfully—my mother and sisters till their death; I, the last surviving, till the period assigned has expired, and the time arrived when I have to fear neither the vengeance of the nobles nor the tyranny of the Council of Ten; but to the point.

“It was at three o’clock on a sultry summer afternoon”—began my father—“that I sat myself down at the base of the granite pillar which supports the saintly Teodoro, and stretched my lazy limbs on the stone slabs below it. I fell to counting, with sleepy eyes, the pillars of the Doge’s Palace, up and down, then down and up; miscounted them,





"ALL THE WORLD WAS HAVING ITS SIESTA."

and tried again—feeling my eyelids becoming heavier with each number I told. The footsteps of the guard holding watch under the colonnade fell ever duller and fainter on my ears. Now and then one of the pigeons from the Place of St. Mark whirled past over my head, hastening to seek refuge from the glowing heat under the eaves of the church. It was so still, that I could hear the little wavelets as they broke against the bows of the gondolas. All the world was having its siesta, and I was in a good way to follow suit, when the shout, 'Hi! Antonello, up there! A league's row on the canal!' startled me out of my doze.

"The shout proceeded from Count Orazio Memmo—the most amiable good-for-nothing in all Venice. Three-and-twenty years old, tall and slim, a well-cut pale face, with the blackest and most brilliant eyes in the world; as clever as daring, as rich as generous, a bold gamester, a passionate worshipper of women—such was my patron.

"Mistrustful of the gondoliers of his uncle, the Councillor, in whom, not without ground,

he suspected spies on his goings and comings, the young gallant needed on his adventures a quick-witted, fearless fellow, a silent, perfectly reliable assistant—and in me he had found his man. Ah, when I think of those old wild times, those brilliant Carnivals, those nightly revelries and serenades, those mysterious rendezvous in the gardens of the Giudecca! Fathers and lovers cursed Orazio Memmo worse than the Grand Turk, and many a handful of silver coin has poured into my cap when my swift gondola has distanced the enraged pursuer, and I have landed the happy lover, un-

discovered, on the marble steps of the Casa Memmo.

"Quick as thought did I spring to my legs at the sound of the well-known voice, then loosed the chain from the stake, and when his Excellency had seated himself on the luxurious cushions, pushed off vigorously from the land.

"The boat may have been gliding gently over the water for about a half-hour. Inaudibly fell the oar into the green waves—but there was no hurry, and my patron had no aim but to dream away an hour in *dolce far niente*. Presently, however, a foreign gondola rushed up with hasty strokes of the oars behind us, and then shot quickly past. The deck was covered with a silver carpet streaked in red, and the heavy silk tassels that hung from the gunwales trailed along the surface of the water. The two rowers were clothed in a rich stuff of the same design. In front of the cabin sat on a brocaded cushion a Moorish boy, with a broad golden neck-band, a dagger hanging from glittering chains by his side, and balanc-



"WITH A SKILFUL THROW, SHE CAST A LILY INTO OUR CABIN."

ing on his fist a shrill, rainbow-coloured parrot. The Venetian blinds were drawn up on both sides, and the eye could penetrate into the interior of the boat as she flew past.

"On the cushions reclined a divinely beautiful woman. A closely-fitting, gold-embroidered over-garment enveloped her dainty figure, and wide, open pantaloons of Eastern cut fell over her little slippers prettily worked in flowers. The long golden hair descended from the snowy whiteness of the brow, and fell in curly waves upon the shoulders and bosom. But how can I describe to you the sorcery of that lovely countenance, the moist glance of those black eyes, the smile that played around those pomegranate lips? As the foreign boat floated past our own, the lady put down the long-necked guitar, on whose golden strings her fingers had been dallying, and, with a skilful throw, cast a lily into our cabin, calling out at the same time a few foreign-sounding words. The rowers at once began to ply their oars lustily, and in the twinkling of an eye were a hundred yards in front.

"'Follow, follow, Antonello!' cried the patrician—'twenty sequins are thine if we overtake her, if we discover the home of this angelic stranger.'

"'You may rely upon me, Excellenza; so long as the oar does not break, and my arm retains its strength, the beautiful heathen shall not escape us.'

"And now to keep my word—to maintain my hard-won fame. Swift as the flight of doves fled the stranger before us, and like a

bloodthirsty falcon we followed up behind. On the left they turned into one of the side streets, and there seemed to slacken their speed as if to make sure that we had not lost their track, as if they *wished* to be followed—and then once more started in wild haste through large and small canals—right and left, and then straight forward—past San Nicolo—till at last both the gondolas were rocking on the waters of the lagoon that lies on the road to Fusina.

"Still onwards fled the enchanting boat. Sometimes it was as if a shooting star was before us, so gloriously did the sun stream down on the glittering deck, and I was obliged to close my eyes to shut out the glare, and cease for a moment to row. Then the Count would urge me on to still greater efforts, and I would fall on my knee, and drive the oar deep into the water till the foam swirled high to the iron-comb of the figure-head.

"From out of the pursued gondola sounded now and then the sharp cry of the parrot, and then again the notes of a lute, to which the Moorish boy answered with the rattle of the tambourine, and at intervals the bewitching, enticing voice of the Eastern. She sang:—

Where arcades of oleander,  
Purple in the gloaming show,  
Where in founts marmorean wander,  
Fish that gold and silver glow;  
Where nightingales  
Sigh out their wails,  
To love-sick maidens murmur low—  
There, there,  
Shalt thou with me my secret share.

Where the darts from Phœbus' quiver  
 Never pierce the myrtle groves,  
 Where by many a lonely river  
 Birds trill out their happy loves ;  
     Where the gushing  
     Streamlet rushing  
 Through the starlit dingle roves—  
     There, there,  
 Shalt thou with me my secret share.

Orazio Memmo, one of the cleverest improvisers of his time, seized my zither, and answered at once :—

Where thou leadest I will follow,  
 Sweet enigma, after thee ;  
 Heed I not if joy or sorrow  
 The guerdon of my quest shall be—  
     Yet on the strand,  
     Enchantress, land,  
 And if thy heart incline to me—  
     There, there,  
 Shall I with thee thy secret share.

"We were approaching nearer and nearer to the strange gondola. Our bow cut anew the waves before the track of theirs had

disappeared on the water, and the foam that followed her was like a silver cord which she had thrown out to drag us, like prisoners, behind her. Thus we ran into the Brenta Canal, flew past the sumptuous villas and pleasure houses of the rich Venetians, and stopped before a high marble portal, through the gilt bars of which we could look into a spacious garden laid out with princely magnificence.

"The stranger stepped out. By San Marco! a queenly form with witching grace in every movement. Slowly she turned her face, lighted with the sweetest smile, once more toward my master; from the soft, black, gazelle-like eyes gleamed on him a friendly light, and then she moved forward from the spot. The little Moor, holding a gaudy sunshade over the head of his mistress, and the chattering bird on his fist, followed close at her heels. The gates flew open, shut clashing behind them; the pair then slowly approached the castle through a lane formed of laurels and myrtles, and vanished.

"Beautiful as a dream!" cried Signor Memmo, rousing himself from his bewilderment; "and to whom does the garden, the castle, belong?"

"I do not know at all, Eccellenza; I see them to-day for the first time; and yet this is the Brenta Canal—a thousand times have I rowed over it; I know every gate, every villa, every bush—but, by San Antonio, never have I seen a stone of this castle

before. Ah, Illustrissimo, take my word for it, all is not as it should be here! It is the delusion of the devil, nothing more. Utter but one "paternoster," and the whole phantasm will vanish like a streak of mist.

Have you not heard of vampires? You have only to ask the Grecian and Illyrian boatmen, and they will tell you how the wraiths of these child-murderers appear as young and beautiful women, and fill with love the brains of the young men, and suck out their hearts' blood as they slumber. And such a vampire is the Eastern princess there—I will take the sacrament to it! Take my advice, Eccellenza. Let us return, and that as quickly as possible. Here we stand on unholy ground."

"I looked round now for the strange gondola; she had vanished completely, as though swallowed by the Brenta. I pointed this



"SLOWLY SHE TURNED HER FACE."

out to my master; he called me superstitious and a simpleton. I began to repeat an 'ave,' but the castle refused to vanish, and remained before my eyes a substantial and obstinate fact. Black cypresses looked with elongated necks over the wall, and fig-trees stretched gnarled branches like fingers towards us, as if to beckon us in. Glittering lizards crept up the parapets and looked at us with sparkling, spiteful eyes. On the cornices stood hideous figures in marble of the most repulsive ugliness—goat-footed satyrs that made faces at us, little hunch-backed creatures with three-cornered hats, crinolined dames with horses' heads, dragons, griffins, monsters with grins and leers and distortions that only *diabolus* could invent. Among the hateful masks walked a peacock with a long trailing tail, its blue neck shimmering in the sun.

"How to get into the garden?" murmured Count Orazio, staring dreamily before him. 'The gate might be scaled—a bold spring, and—'

"What are you thinking of, Eccellentissimo?" said I, warningly. 'For the Madonna's sake, give up the thought. Your body and soul are alike at stake. Believe me, the devil walketh about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour.'

"My warning sounded in deaf ears. He had already sprung from the gondola, when a wicket opened, and an old Moor stepped before him with a deep curtsy; he brought a request from his mistress, the Signora Smeralda, for the honour of a visit in her garden. In vain did I hold back the blinded and intoxicated patrician by his black silk mantle; in vain did I try to excuse myself from following him; he rushed through the gate, dragging me with him, while the old slave remained to guard our gondola.

"Strange flowers, never seen before, such as can only be supposed to grow in the pleasure-gardens of the Great Mogul himself, nodded drowsily to us as we passed. Rainbow-coloured birds flew from branch to branch, twittering, singing, shouting with almost human voice, like a chorus of happy, chattering maidens. Once an ugly, long-tailed monkey swung himself down from a tree before us, holding on with his tail to a branch; grinned spitefully at us, and then hurried off once more into the wilderness of foliage. From one of the side alleys stepped a purple-coloured stork, as gravely as a major-domo, before us, swayed his long neck hither and thither, as if bowing to us, and then walked forward as our guide, ever and

anon looking round to see if we followed. For my part, I followed as in a dream, resisting, and yet drawn forward as by some inexplicable magic.

"Presently we stood before an immense, strange-looking tree, with broad shining leaves hung thick with silvery bell-shaped blossoms. In the shade of its branches lay costly Persian carpets and cushions of crimson velvet embroidered in pearls, and on them the heathen Princess, surrounded by a bevy of beauteous maidens, was reclining with the utmost grace. The little Moor stood at her head, fanning her with a broad fan of bright peacock's feathers. The red stork, which had hitherto walked before us, now stood still, opened wide his legs, drove his long beak into the earth, and so, slightly raising its wings for cushions, formed a three-legged easy chair on which Count Orazio, at a sign from the lady, sat down.

"Lost in gazing at the fair Smeralda, the Count had sat down speechless before her, while she, calling for her lute, discoursed sweet music; I had stood beside his tripodal chair torn by many feelings, when the young Moor with a cunningly-worked golden goblet full of a dark-red foaming wine stepped up to my master. 'Drink not of this brew of hell, Signor!' I whispered, and at the same time felt myself embraced by the white arm of a lovely little witch who offered me a similar draught.

"My first instinct was to spurn from me the beautiful little elf, to dash away the magic draught—but the wine gave out so sweet an aroma, sparkled so enticingly, so brightly, within the golden walls! The eyes of the elf glanced so entreatingly at me, her arms wound themselves so tenderly about me—ah, the spirit truly was willing, but the flesh was weak!

"Only one sip, thought I, only the wetting of the tip of my tongue—that will hardly cost me my neck. And then I sipped, I tasted, I sucked, I gulped down the liquid to the very last drop—then I fell on the neck of the pretty temptress, and on looking round saw my master on his knees before the seductive Smeralda. I touched with my own the lips of my charmer—my senses whirled in a transport of delight—when, breathless from out the bushes rushed the negro boy, crying: 'Fly! Fly! All is lost! Porporinazzo, our gracious master, is coming! He raves in his rage!'

"Ah, the warning voice had come too late; scarcely had it sounded when a short, globular creature, of the form and colour

of a dark-red apple, rolled up to Smeralda and her *inamorato*. On close observation there might certainly be discovered some indications, at the extremities of the creature, of the existence of limbs, which you might or might not take to be head, arms, and legs; but of the depressions and bumps at the north pole of this globe, to construct in fancy eyes, nose, and mouth, required a quite special faculty of which I was not the master.

"Is this the thanks, serpent, for the trust reposed in you?" shrieked Porporinazzo to the pale Smeralda. 'Is this the reward of my true and constant love? You stoop to this unbelieving dog; and me, me, Don Porporinazzo, the Grand Master of the Wardrobe of the Sultan, thou desertest! Ha, by Mahomet's sacred cat, this cries aloud for bloody vengeance! Slaves, approach!'

"Six negroes, with diabolical physiognomies, with arms and sabres bare, started from the hedges, seized Orazio and myself, and tied our hands behind our backs. In vain did the Count plead his inviolability as a Venetian noble; in vain did he threaten with the wrath of the Doge and of the Senate. The little Grand Master made a sign with his little arm—a flash, a sabre-stroke—and our two heads were rolling on the ground!

"My fair one had long ago fled behind the myrtle hedge, and Signora Smeralda had taken the stereotype step of ladies in desperate circumstances—she had fainted. The tyrant Porporinazzo, proud of his bloody deed, had now retired once more into the palace. I could see all, for my head was lying on the ground, with its nose turned skywards. Once or twice I made convulsive efforts with my arms to catch it, and fix it on my trunk again—but my hands clutched only empty air, and sank, nerveless, down. No words can describe my condition; only those who have found themselves in a like position, and felt their heads at so unreasonable a distance from their bodies, can at all appreciate my emotions at that moment.

"The spherical Grand Master of the Wardrobe had scarcely turned his back, when Smeralda awoke out of her faint, burst into a flood of tears, and despairingly wrung her hands. At the same moment my fugitive loved one emerged from her hiding place, but lost no time in meaningless common-places, urging on her mistress to make the best of the precious moments.

"For heaven's sake, Signora,' she said,

'send for a doctor, the cleverest there is to be had. Quick! With every second the blood grows colder and colder. In five minutes it will be too late. The magic doctor, Bartolinetto, of Padua, would be just the man—only quick, quick! Send Don Flamingo to Padua—for on his activity and fidelity we can safely rely.'

"Happy thought, Libella,' answered the Princess; 'call the Don.'

"She clapped her hands thrice. The great red stork strode quickly up, and at a few whispered words from the elf, nodded as if in assent, and flew crowing into the air.

"Four pairs of eyes gazed now with anxious expectancy towards heaven. A horrid pause, during which the fair ladies dared not, and the Count and I could not, breathe, ensued. But before you could say a 'paternoster' there was once more a rushing noise high in the air, and the mighty bird stormed down, holding Doctor Bartolinetto, like a halfpenny doll, in his beak, and placed him, a little thin brown man, neat and well dressed, though a little out of breath, upon the ground.

"A glance sufficed to make the learned man acquainted with the state of affairs. He felt our pulse, then drew from his pocket the famous Perlimpimpino powder, his own infallible discovery, and turned up his coat sleeves. He was grumbling all the time at the indelicacy of his being interrupted in the middle of a lecture and dragged forcibly out of his college, to the scandal of his audience, and loudly bemoaned the derangement of his powdered wig, which had somewhat suffered in his aerial journey; then he seized my head by the nose, sprinkled some of the Perlimpimpino powder on the neck, dabbed it on to the defective part, took Orazio's head, did the same with that—we sneezed three times with some emphasis, sprang blithely up, shook ourselves, sneezed once more—the cure was complete!

"The fair ones flew joyfully to our arms; on my cheek burned the kiss of the beautiful Smeralda, while Libella hugged the Count—but to kiss, to tear away from the embrace, to utter a startled cry, was the work of an instant. Dreadful mistake! The doctor in his hurry had stuck my head on Orazio's shoulders, and that of the noble on the trunk of the poor gondolier!

"On recovering from the first shock at the discovery we turned to vent our wrath on the doctor. The nobleman promised him a hundred lashes, and I threatened still worse things, unless he restored to each his own.



Poor Bartolinetto shrugged his shoulders till they reached his ears, made the most profuse apologies, and sought to pacify us with the

soon hopelessly confused, and ended by advising us to return to Venice and lay our case before the magistrates.



"AFTER ALL, A HEAD WAS A HEAD."

sophism that 'after all, a head was a head.' But everyone felt the hollowness of the plea; Smeralda called him a 'wretched old quack,' Libella threatened to make for his eyes. His reproaches of ingratitude were unheeded, his suggestion of a fee was rejected with scornful laughter. At a sign from Libella, he was again seized by the stork, and carried back thus ignominiously to Padua.

"We now directed our rage against each other. Our imprecations and threats would soon have developed into actual violence, had not each feared to do a part of himself some injury while belabouring his antagonist. Which was now Orazio, which Antonello? Which noble man, and which gondolier? My old head pleaded its new and noble body as the most important half, maintaining that the hull of a ship alone determined its class, the flag which might happen to be hoisted at its stern being a mere secondary detail. My opponent, on the other hand, compared himself to a column in which the capital is the sole feature determining to what order it is to belong. The two fair ladies tried to settle our dispute—but they were themselves

"Coldly we bid them farewell and departed. Antonello-Orazio, or the peasant head on the noble trunk, threw himself in a lazy and distinguished way on the cushions, and haughtily commanded Orazio-Antonello to row back. The latter was compelled to obey, for his plebeian arms alone could ply the oars and guide the helm—but he gnashed his teeth, and swore to take dreadful vengeance for this insult; and so we rowed back—the grandee with the coarse red gondolier's cap sitting on the cushions, and laughing to scorn the proud peasant in the bows with his feathered hat and faultlessly dainty wig.

"We landed at the *piazzetta*. Negligently I drew out the purse which I found in my new clothes, and tossed the rower a coin.

"'Give me back my money!' he cried; 'give me my rings, my watch, my head!'

"'Silence, wretched slave,' I cried; 'darest thou lay hands on my inviolate person? Help, against this crack-brained gondolier!'

"'Help, help,' he exclaimed, 'against this insolent boatman!'

"A crowd had by this time assembled, some taking my part and some his. The Doge, who was just then walking up and down the



"SILENCE, WRETCHED SLAVE."

colonnade of his palace, heard the scandal, and ordered us to be placed in the inner dungeon of the Inquisition, and brought up for trial the same evening.

"The Public Prosecutor accused us, not only of the black art itself, but of being disturbers of the public peace and conspirators against the safety of the State. 'What have we come to,' he declaimed, 'when our senators and patricians begin to change their heads as often as their wigs? To lose the head is human. The history of the illustrious Republic is not poor in examples of senators and generals, aye, and Doges too, who have suffered this misfortune—but an exchange of heads, that is, indeed, an unparalleled proceeding! What endless upheavals of the Constitution may not be expected when noble and common blood begins to mingle in

the same body? What endless confusion of aristocratic and democratic principles in the same man! A shortsighted leniency in this matter may mean the disruption of the State, the crumbling into atoms of the Republic. I decree therefore the death

by beheadal of both the criminals."

"The Secretary of the Inquisition informed us of our doom; at midnight we were to pay the penalty of the little doctor's mistake. Ah, what mortal has ever met a fate like ours? Who is there can boast of being, like us, beheaded twice within the space of four-and-twenty hours?

"The keeper of the prison was, as it happened, an old friend of mine, and a second cousin. The unspeakable pickle I was in moved him even to tears, and he tried to comfort me by the assurance that the pain of beheadal was nothing to speak of—a short electric shock—a tickling sensation made piquant with a dash of pain—that was all! But I shook my head sadly, and wept. Of all this I already knew somewhat more than he could tell me. Suddenly a glorious thought struck me. After our miraculous cure, as I now remembered, my fingers, guided either by the directing brain of Orazio or by the



"HE TRIED TO COMFORT ME."

old instinct of Antonello, had picked up the remnants of the Perlimpimpino powder left by the doctor. 'Cousin!' I now exclaimed, 'you can save me yet; you can save the Count! Hasten to his cell, remind him of the remains of the powder in his pocket, and learn from him the way to use it, and all will yet be well!' He shook his head incredulously, pressed my hand, and went.

"Sadly passed the minutes away. The horrid doubt oppressed me, whether the powder would exercise its wondrous efficacy in the absence of the doctor; whether the mystic sentences he spoke over it had not everything to do with its power; whether the gaoler could exercise the necessary quickness and accuracy in its use. The lamp that half lit up my low vault burnt darkly and sadly, as if impatiently waiting my departure, so that it, too, might go to sleep. In despair I threw myself on the marble bench and shut my eyes, but the glitter of the dreadful axe shone through my fast-closed eyelids. Then a knock at the door sounded in my ears, and the words: 'Wake up, Antonello, the priest is waiting; take thy beheading, cousin, and afterwards thou mayest sleep till the trump of doom!'

"The memory of what followed—of confession and absolution, of the executioner's block—has completely vanished from my brain. I only know that I sneezed violently, opened my eyes, and found myself once more in my usual dress, lying at the foot of the column under the shadow of the holy Teodoro; that I saw standing at my feet the patrician Orazio Memmo, and that I heard him calling: 'Hi, wake up, Antonello! A league's row on the canal!'

"'Eccellenza!' I cried, 'and you will go again to the enchanted garden of Proporinazzo? And we are both really alive and

free, and the confusion with our heads is now happily disposed of?'

"He measured me with his eye, shook his head as if at a loss to understand me, and asked if I was still dreaming, or if the cheap Vincentin wine was muddling my brain. Dejected and silent I loosed the chain and rowed the nobleman up and down. No trace of any strange red and silver gondola could be seen, far or near. Count Orazio dozed away the hour on the water with a composure that seemed inexplicable to me. When we landed, I implored him at least to tell me whether we had no further consequences to fear on the part of the Tribunal; whether he had not saved a pinch or two of the Perlimpimpino powder for future contingencies. But he persisted in pretending surprise and called me a fool; and I then concluded that a stony silence had been imposed on him by the Inquisition, and that he pretended ignorance with design.

"Since that day I have not breathed a word of the incident to any human being; and you, my children, are the first to whom, under the seal of an oath, I entrust it. Had I not, since that day, suffered from a peculiar twitching sensation in the neck, at the place where the double wound was made—especially when the weather changes—I might have taken the whole for a dreadful dream. As it is, however, the plain facts remain, burned in, in vivid colours, on my brain."

With these words my father closed his story, the telling of which had used up all his remaining strength. We sent at once for the priest of San Moise. He came with the holy Viaticum, and anointed the forehead of my father, who soon after breathed out his last sigh. Peace be with the soul of the honest man!



*The Queer Side of Things.*

# THE JUDGE'S PENANCE



"YOUR

crime," said Lord Justice Pimblekin, "is the most heartless, atrocious, inhuman, and horrible that it has ever been my misfortune to hear of: your long and cold-blooded premeditation; the cynical indifference to the result of your atrocities, combined with the delight with which you have wallowed in human gore; your contempt for all the dictates of honesty, truth, pity, and good faith; your greed, ingratitude, treachery, savageness, meanness, and cannibalism; all these things stamp you as the most atrocious, unmitigated and



loathsome scoundrel, savage, monster, and vampire that ever wallowed in the foul and fathomless quagmire of infinite and immeasurable dastardliness.

"Under these circumstances I ought to inflict upon you the severest penalty which the law allows. I say it is my unmistakable duty to sentence you to penal servitude for life, with the cat once a week.

"Mercy would be thrown away upon you.

"Under these circumstances I will disregard my palpable duty, and render the whole proceedings a farce, by sentencing you to a fine of forty shillings, or a month."

The fine being immediately paid, the prisoner left the court amid the congratulations of his friends.

New laurels were added to the already super-foliated wreath of Lord Justice Pimblekin by this fresh masterpiece of judicial wisdom. He was already the most renowned of all the judges on the Bench, and the admiration and envy of the whole judicial and forensic body.

His verdicts had a character of their own; the severity of his denunciation of inextenuable crime was only equalled by the inadequacy of the punishment dealt out; as he explained on each occasion, he never did his duty.

He designed a mixture of justice, equity,



and mercy; only he left out the first two ingredients. After the mental strain of that historical verdict recounted above, his lordship took a holiday. He had an offer of a seat in a balloon which was about to ascend, and accepted. The machine ascended successfully from his lordship's grounds, sailed majestically out to sea, and disappeared in the distance.

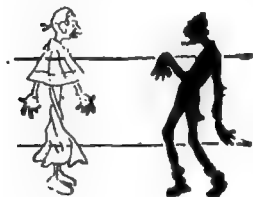
With the utmost anxiety the whole community waited for further news of the balloon; but none arrived. Either the eminent judge had been picked up by a passing ship bound for some remote parts, or he had perished.

A year passed without news; and it was then decided to erect a cenotaph to his lordship in Westminster Abbey.

One evening some time after this decision, *Jemmy Wedge* and *Bill Slinker*, the eminent burglars, sat in their humble room near the Mint, arranging the final details of a burglary



dated for the following evening. *Jemmy's* eye, glancing casually round the room, perceived a dim figure standing in a dark corner. With a strong expression of disapproval, *Jemmy* jumped to his feet and sprang towards



the intruding eavesdropper; but stopped suddenly with an ejaculation of surprise as he recognised the well-known and revered features of *Lord Justice Pimblekin*!

A flood of contending emotions welled up in the mind of *Jemmy Wedge*—rage at the overhearing of his plans by an intruder, and that intruder an administrator of the law; fear of the consequences; inveterate and deep-rooted affection for the judge who had so often saved him from the well-merited penalties of crime; surprise, wonder.

His arm, raised to fell the eavesdropper, sank impotently to his side: he gasped and stared.

"You need have no anxiety," said *Lord Justice Pimblekin* in a strange, hollow, far-off voice, "your secret is safe with me. I will not blow the gaff."

These words, spoken with the quiet judicial accent which *Jemmy* knew so well, yet in the far-off tone mentioned above, made *Jemmy's* eyes rounder than ever with wonderment.

No word of slang had ever before passed the lips of the judge: for slang might indeed be unintelligible to a judge who knew not what a race-course was, and would ask in court, "What is the 'Stock Exchange'—is it a cattle market?"

*Lord Justice Pimblekin's* head was drooped hopelessly upon his bosom; and he now covered his face with his trembling hands, while a bright tear crept out between his fingers, as he murmured in a quivering voice, "I am one of you now! I'm a pal—that's what I am; straight, and no kid, my pippin!"



The painful effort with which these words were uttered was apparent in his whole frame. He had not finished speaking; he was obviously struggling with another word, which threatened to choke him. With an expression of horror and despair, he clutched his bald head; and then the word came—the single word "*Blimey!*" It was uttered in the same soft, mincing, judicial accents.

Then his lordship moved across the room and, sitting upon the table near the fire, drew out a short dirty clay pipe, lit it at the candle, and sat puffing at it; an occasional tear still creeping down his furrowed cheek.

"You may proceed with your deliberations with a perfect sense of security," he said anon. "Djeer, old pal? I ain't goin' to give yer away."

Every phrase of this kind evidently inflicted upon the unfortunate judge the most acute pain.

"To convince you how little you have to

apprehend from me," he continued, "I may inform you that I shall never again occupy my former judicial position; in fact, I am incapacitated from doing so by the fact that I am a GHOST!"

Now, Jemmy Wedge and Bill Slinker were superstitious and nervous to a degree, as most burglars are; and at that announcement their hair rose, and they stood gazing at the speaker with glaring eyes and chattering teeth.

"I am sorry to cause you such alarm," said the spectre, "and assure you I should only be too happy to go; but I cannot—it is not permitted me to do so.

"The balloon in which I ascended was found to have some defect in the valve, which made it impossible to descend; it, consequently, after rising to a great altitude, burst, hurling myself and the three other occupants of the car into the sea. I was unfortunately drowned—a most terrible loss to society! The three others were drowned also; but, as they were neither judges nor counsel, but merely ordinary persons, liable to be called as jurors or witnesses, their loss need not further concern us. If they had survived, they would have been subsequently killed at some time or other by their treatment in court.

"Well, I found myself floating among the disembodied spirits in space; and I became conscious that certain of those in my vicinity were eyeing me askance and whispering together in a menacing and most disturbing manner——" At this point the spectre broke down for a moment, and sobbed audibly, his emotion culminating in the words, "Strike me pink!" He then proceeded: "You must excuse this emotion—the whole thing has been too much for me—djeer?—in a most menacing and disturbing manner. Now and again these threatening spirits would

beckon to their circle certain of those that passed; and these joined them in their minative demonstrations until, knock me funny! if the whole rabble did not surround me, covering me with vituperation. I gleaned from the evidence before me that they were innocent persons who had suffered in consequence of the inadequate punishments I had dealt out to vari-

ous criminals during my judicial career. There was a woman who had been murdered by her husband after his release from the seven days I had given him for breaking both her arms and legs; there were seven babies who had been made away with by another malefactor, in his joy at escaping with one month for kicking a policeman to death. There were several hundreds of persons who had succumbed to the practices of a purveyor of diseased meat to the London markets who was an especial protégé of mine and whom I always—after the most scathing comments on his villainy—let off with a fine; and so forth.

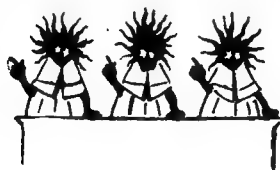
"These indignant spectres dragged me before three spirits who acted as judges in those parts, and who, as I understood, had formerly been Mahatmas when living; and these, after hearing the evidence before the court, pronounced upon me a most—s'elp me beans!—a most terrible sentence. I was condemned







to return to earth as a ghost, and there remain until the evil consequences of my lapses of duty had fully worked themselves out. This, they calculated, would amount to a sentence of about seven thousand years. There was no option of a fine, while my request for leave to appeal for a mandamus was dismissed with costs. My sentence also provided that I should be compelled to assist in all the crimes resulting from my own leniency, and should be powerless to prevent



them by warning the sufferers or the authorities. And," concluded the unhappy spectre, sobbing aloud, "here I am, s'elp me!"

The two burglars were really touched, for they had loved Lord Justice Pimblekin as a true and valuable friend.

They knew him to have been an old gentleman whose abhorrence of the vulgarity of crime had been equalled by his sensitive horror of illiterate, vulgar, or slangy speech; and they thus, to a certain extent, understood the painful nature of his present position, for the involuntary use of the idiom and ways of the society in which he was now condemned to mix was a part of his sentence.

Far into the night the judge sat smoking his short spectral pipe and drinking from an unsubstantial pewter pot, while he listened, shuddering, to the plans of the two



judge had done his duty, these two would still have been working out their time for the last crime but seven which they had



committed; whereas Lord Pimblekin had let them off for that job with three months, and visited their subsequent deeds with penalties which decreased at a constant ratio, until for the latest—burglary entry, removal of property valued at £500, wilful destruction of other property valued at £5,000, and maiming of two policemen and one footman—he had given them seven days.



Now, it happened that there had been for the last year or so before the disappearance of Justice Pimblekin a disagreement of a somewhat painful nature between himself and his twin brother the Bishop of Hampstead.

Both were old gentlemen of the utmost purity and philanthropy of principle, to whom the injuring of anyone—especially a brother—would have been an idea of the utmost horror.

Besides this, their mutual affection was really very strong; but they had quarrelled about a matter of principle—a mere trifle: whether a piece of toast should be buttered

burglars for the carrying out of their crime. With growing horror he gradually gleaned that the crib to be cracked was the house of his twin brother the Bishop of Hampstead, a lonely mansion near the village of Highgate.

He watched the two malefactors as they cleaned and loaded their revolvers and made other preparations for the expedition. If that

on the right or left side ; and their feelings had become temporarily embittered.



This painful circumstance naturally increased the horror of the unhappy spectre at the present plans of the burglars, and he made the wildest efforts to go to his brother

and warn him ; but he was glued to the table.

Just as the clocks were striking 2 a.m., however, he felt that he could move ; and swiftly gliding away from the attic, he hurried down into the street and strained every nerve to direct his course towards Highgate.

But every effort was vain ; he was drawn, against his will, to a house where an habitual criminal whom his lordship had let loose upon society was engaged in preparing poisoned food for a family.

Having assisted in the mixing of the poison, he passed on and found himself in a room with a swindling company-director whom he had let off with six months instead of fifty years ; and here he assisted in the drawing up of a new prospectus specially designed for the benefit of the widow and the fatherless who might happen to have a mite or two to be relieved of.

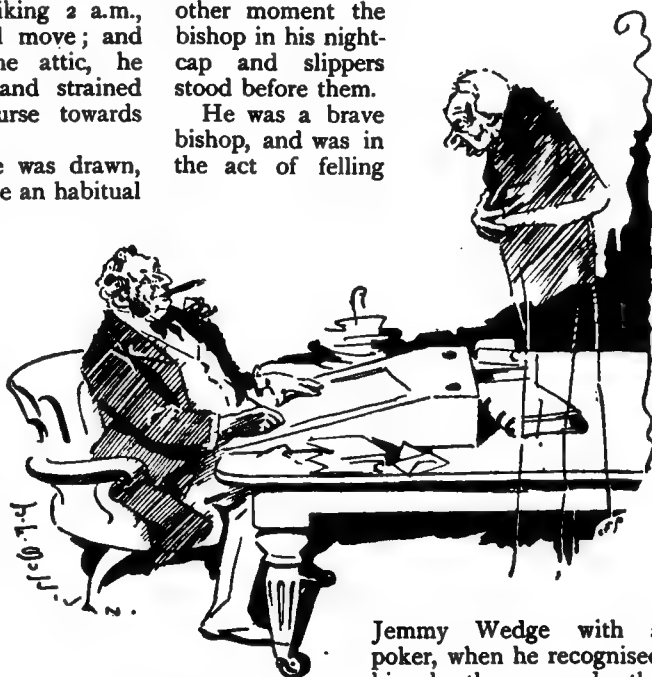
By this time it was morning ; and the judge's ghost found himself in a shed where that diseased-meat purveyor whom he had alluded to was busy packing for the market ; and the ghost helped with advice.

All that day he wandered from one criminal to another, from one victim to another ; until the following night he once more joined the two burglars Jemmy and Bill at the carriage-gate of the residence of the Bishop of Hampstead. Convulsed with inexpressible grief, the spectre advised the stretching of wires across the lawn to trip up pursuers ; then struggling madly against the words which he was forced to utter, he offered, as a ghost, to glide in through the walls and discover the most vulnerable

fastenings ; an offer which the two burglars eagerly and gratefully accepted. After this the judge's ghost pointed out where the plate was kept, and assisted in chloroforming the butler and stealing the key ; and then he led the way to the cabinet in which the Bishopess of Hampstead kept her jewels, and kept watch while it was forced and the valuables were extracted.

All three had safely reached the library on their way out, when a piercing scream rang through the house ; it was the scream of the spectre's sister-in-law the bishopess who had just awoke and discovered the loss of the jewels ; and in another moment the bishop in his night-cap and slippers stood before them.

He was a brave bishop, and was in the act of felling



Jemmy Wedge with a poker, when he recognised his brother ; and the weapon fell from his hand, giving Jemmy a chance of whipping out his revolver and firing. The bishop fell ; and the judge's ghost and he were left alone. Beside himself with despair, the ghost bent over his brother and tried to weep ; but he felt that he was grinning from ear to ear and chuckling derisively. The wounded bishop slowly opened his eyes and gazed at him in grief and horror.

"Peter !" he gasped.

"He, he !" said the ghost. "We're quits now. I said I would round on you, old pal ! You've got it now." Then straining every agonized nerve to prevent it, the judge's



ghost began to jig round the prostrate bishop and snap his fingers and hop lightly over him.

The other members of the family and the servants had collected and were gazing upon the scene: Mrs. Bishop glared at the ghost, uttered the word "Peter!" screamed a piercing scream, and swooned.

They carried the bishop and the bishopess upstairs and sent for a doctor, while the members of the family stood around the judge's ghost, gazing upon him with indignation and repugnance. In a hurried



consultation they agreed that it would never do to hand him over to the police, as such a family scandal was not to be thought of.

"Do not loathe me," said the unfortunate spectre; "I am only a ghost!"

"A ghost!" cried the family in chorus; "a nice subterfuge! You expect us to believe that, of course? Go! Let us never see your face again!"

Slowly and with downcast eyes the ghost crept out through the bookcase and rejoined Jemmy and Bill to assist in disposing of the swag. They lavished upon him terms of endearment, and insisted on treating him at every public-house in the neighbourhood; and the sight of that respectably-dressed old gentleman with kid gloves and a short clay pipe surprised the pot-boys. The ghost could not consume the liquor, being too unsubstantial. At short intervals he would retire into a dark corner to beat his breast in remorse and anguish.

Presently Jemmy and Bill, who had been whispering earnestly together, turned respectfully to the spectre; they appeared very nervous, as though afraid to broach some delicate matter which was on their minds.

"Beg parding, boss—I mean my lordship"—began Jemmy, hesitatingly, and fidgeting from one foot to the other; "but we was a-going to ask yer if as how you'd 'ave enny objection——"

"Yus," chimed in Bill. "If ye'd take the 'uff if so be as we wos to——"

"Dry up, you, Bill," said Jemmy. "It's just this 'ere, guvnor. We wos a-thinkin' of



crackin' another crib next week as yer might ha' heered ov in yer time—well, to bust out with it straight and candid, it's yer own crib as used to be w'en yer wos alive; but, yer see, bein' as how ye're dead now and it ain't o' no more good to yer—there's a nice little lot of old plate as you've got there as we sho'd be

proud to 'andle. The on'y thing is——"

"Yus, that's w'ere it is," interrupted Bill. "The o'ny thing is as we might 'ave to knock yer missis—axin' pardon; 'er ladyship—on the 'ed, bein' a light sleeper, her maid ses, and a bit ov a spitfire, d'ye see?"

The judge's ghost attempted to give vent to a cry of indignant horror and forbid the attempt in the most unequivocal way. He struggled to rush forth and inform the police and the community; but he heard himself chuckle and felt himself slap the two burglars on the back, and knew that he was saying to them: "Heave ahead, my bloaters! I owe the old Dutch clock one for the naggings she's treated me to. I'm on this job, that's what I am!" And then he puffed away at his short clay, and kept on chuckling until he felt quite sick with misery.

"He's the right sort, so he is," said Bill, "and no two ways abaat it."

"Right yer are," said Jemmy. "'E's the sort o' pal for me, and no error."

Once more the judge's ghost wandered about from one malefactor to another, and from one victim to another, always assisting the malefactors and jeering the victims, and always welcome as a friend by the former, and cursed as an enemy by the latter. He had no rest night or day; he was constantly racked and harrowed by some new shock of grief or repugnance.

The thing got noised about, how the eminent and respected judge Lord Justice Pimblekin had not been killed in his balloon adventure, but had returned to the country and, disregarding all his old associations of morality, refinement, and respectability, was herding with criminals of the lowest type, and indulging in the most nefarious and vulgar practices.

At this time it was his fate to appear at a select meeting of the directors of that Widows' and Orphans' Fleecing Corporation Limited, the prospectus of which he had assisted in drawing up. His presence at first filled the directors with the gravest alarm; but when

the promoter explained how greatly his lordship had changed, they unanimously appointed him chairman. It was passingly suggested that his lordship's growing evil reputation might prejudice the concern in the eyes of the public; but the promoter, who knew the public well, reassuringly explained that investors were so hopelessly idiotic that a board composed entirely of burglars would not prevent their investing so long as the prospectus contained sufficiently impossible promises of profit; so the ghost of Lord Pimblekin officiated as chairman and assisted in causing several suicides.

Then the night came for the cracking of his own crib, and he continued to give vent to a succession of boisterous chuckles every one of which nearly killed him; only a ghost is a difficult thing to kill. Arrived at his palatial suburban residence, he directed the burglars to the outhouse where the ladders were kept; and the three first ascended to her ladyship's dressing-room where the jewels were. The door between the dressing-room and her ladyship's bedroom being open, the ghost undertook to stand over her with a phantom bludgeon to prevent any noise in the event of her waking. She woke, stared at his lordship, looked at the burglars at work at her bureau, gazed once more at the ghost with a look which froze him, murmured "Peter," and sank back with closed eyes.

Half mad with misery, the ghost directed the burglars to the plate and other valuables, and then looked on chuckling while they tore the silk curtains, jumped on her ladyship's favourite violin, ripped the carpet with a clasp-knife, cut the throat of the pug, and twisted the necks of the canaries and linnets and doves.

Then they left quietly; and, as the ghost followed them out, he was conscious of an immaterial form similar to his own standing at his side. "Come with me," said the form; and they whirled through space until

they arrived in the same court in which sentence had been passed upon him. The three Mahatmas were still sitting on the bench, and the chief Mahatma said:—

"Prisoner, your case is one of the worst which it has ever been our painful task to pass sentence upon. Your reckless disregard of what you recognised as your duty and of the consequences of your misdemeanours on the bench render mercy in your case entirely out of place. It is our duty to give you the benefit of the full seven thousand years to which you have been sentenced; we will, however, release you on your own recognisances and allow you to return to earthly existence and again fill your former judicial sphere, with a view to observing how you go on for the future. You will be bound over to come up for judgment if called upon."

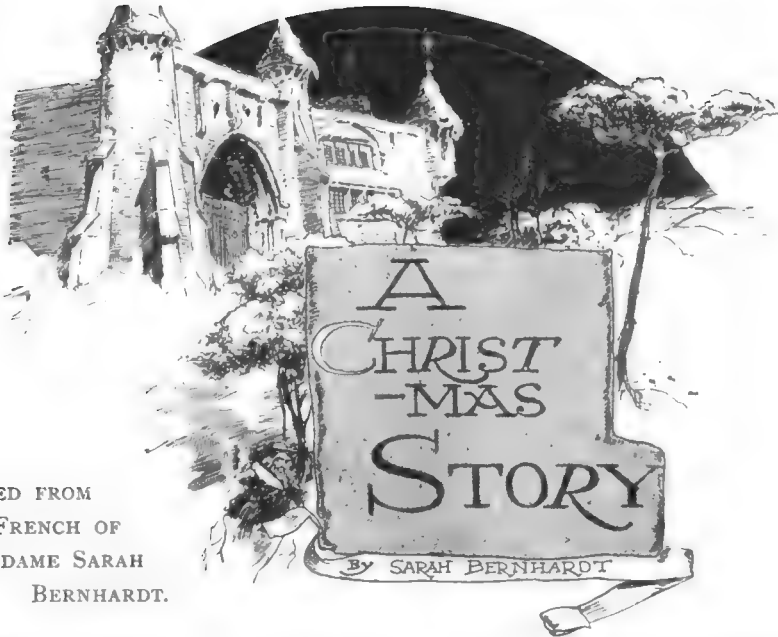
Instantly our judge found himself in the flesh once more, and robing for his accustomed seat on the bench. His reappearance caused great surprise, as his evil reputation was now public property and the authorities had removed his cenotaph from Westminster Abbey and sold it to a rag-shop.

However, as it is impossible to remove a judge from the bench even if he murders the Queen, the Royal Family, and the Bench of Bishops, steals the watches of the whole Houses of Lords and Commons, and even defrauds the Inland Revenue, Lord Justice Pimblekin was allowed to remain on the bench; and, as he was a socially influential person, by-gones were allowed to be by-gones.

But he was a reformed judge. He did his duty, and gave irredeemable criminals what they deserved; fraudulent company directors got the cat, and diseased meat purveyors a lifer, until there was hardly any crime left. Lord Justice Pimblekin's twin brother and wife recovered, and forgave him; and his lordship has not been called up for judgment yet.

J. F. SULLIVAN.





TRANSLATED FROM  
THE FRENCH OF  
MADAME SARAH  
BERNHARDT.



HE Château de Ploerneuf was the terror of the Bretons. On passing it the peasants made the sign of the cross and murmured under their breath: "The Château of the Accursed!" Brambles grew about its boundary walls, which no living soul dared pass. The valets moved about within like shadows, never raising their voices. No one ever spoke to the master.

Alone, the young Comte Robert found grace before the lord of the manor, the old Duc de Kerberzoff, his uncle.

At the moment when this recital commences, Robert was at the feet of the old man, who, with livid face, glittering eyes, and marks of fear on all his features, sat in the great ducal chair, listening to what the spectre of terror said to him.

By his side, upon a porphyry column, burned a small golden lamp, ornamented with precious stones, into the flame of which a tall negro poured, minute by minute, a drop of oil. In the old man's rude hand gleamed an axe: the negro would have paid with his life the least forgetfulness of his duties.

The Duke was paler than usual. His long white hair clung to his brow, and from his eyes great tears rolled down upon his silver beard.

"My dear lord, are you in greater pain?" asked Robert, tenderly.

The Duke shuddered—listening still.

"Christmas! Christmas!" sang voices in the fields. "Christmas! Christmas!" sounded the church bells.



"ROBERT WAS AT THE FEET OF THE OLD MAN."



Then, drawing himself up, spectre-like, he said :—

"Listen, Robert, listen!"

For twenty years the old man had not spoken.

The sepulchral voice resounded in the great hall; the arms, struck by echo, gave out an iron plaint. The young Count felt frozen with fear.

"Twenty years ago, I had a son; handsome, brave, and generous. He loved a young, low-born girl, and wished to wed her; but I refused—I could not consent to such an outrage. My son implored me, but I remained inflexible. My blazon would have been shattered by such a shame! I was wrong, child—I was wrong! Never be arrogantly proud, it is a mortal sin!"

Sobs stifled the old Duke's voice. But presently he went on :—

"The girl was beautiful and virtuous. I offered her gold; she refused it. Then I had her abducted and shut up in a tower of the château. Months passed; my son remained faithful to his vows, I faithful to my pride. I therefore resolved to kill the girl.

To that end I sent her secretly a message, advising her to escape. A silken ladder was conveyed to her, with minutely detailed instructions as to how she was to fasten it to her window. She prepared to fly—and then I invented an infamous trap!

"Listen, Robert—listen! I caused the stones which supported the window to be loosened, so that it should give way under her and she would be dashed upon the marble pavement of the courtyard below. It was Christmas, the night of that evil deed; and ever since I have slept in fear of God.

"That same night I was transported in dreams into an immense gallery of clouds. Vaults followed upon vaults in millions—extending, ever extending. Under these vaults hung little golden lamps, swaying gently. It would have taken years to count them. Some of them burned brightly, others were extinguished suddenly. Some shone with a violent glare, others flickered and sputtered a long while before they went out.

"Some of these lamps were guarded by angels, white and beautiful as beauty itself. Other of the lamps had angels, black, ugly, and malevolent, who seemed to wait impatiently the moment when the flame should expire.

"What does all this mean?" I asked my conductor.

"All those lamps are human souls," he replied. "Those which burn so brightly are the souls of new-born infants; stainless angels guard them. Here are the souls of those who are at the age when, some think, the Spirit of Evil and the Spirit of Good contend for them; but, at the supreme moment, the last breath almost always returns to the Spirit of Good."

"I then asked to be shown my own lamp.

"Come with me," said the strange being; and, leading me under innumerable vaults, he made me traverse a great distance. At length, stopping me abruptly, he said: 'Behold! there is your soul!'

"I was petrified with terror. A single drop of oil remained in my lamp; and, above it, an angel with black wings blew upon the flame to accelerate its extinction. I was seized



"I HAD HER SHUT UP IN A TOWER."



"AN ANGEL WITH BLACK WINGS BLEW UPON THE FLAME."

with dread—overtaken by cowardice—yes, cowardice!" said the Duke, trembling in every limb.

"Listen, Robert—listen! Beside me burned a flame of purest light: that lamp of gold, protected by an angel with wings of spotless white. The Spirit of Evil whispered in my ear."

The old Duke stopped—as if the voice were speaking to him again. His eyes became bloodshot, his hair rose on his head with horror, his teeth chattered with affright, and when he continued his voice was almost a shriek.

"I went to the lamp guarded by the angel with the white wings, who looked at me sorrowfully; but the angel with the black wings still whispered in my ears. I saw nothing; I did not wish to see anything. I plucked a feather from the wing of the black angel and dipped it in the brightly flaming lamp and took from it the oil, drop by drop, and poured it into mine. My flame became glittering and red as blood; the other paled, but preserved still the brightness of a star. When but one drop of oil was left in it, the angel that

guarded it spread his white wings and would have stayed me; but an angel with pearly wings and bearing a golden sword suddenly appeared.

"Let this human being do according to his will—God will judge him!" it said.

"I took the last drop of oil! Then fear seized me. 'What lamp is this?' I asked, pointing to the poor flame that was ready to expire, and the voice replied:—

"It is the soul of your beloved son."

"At the same moment the clear flame of the lamp died out: the white angel took its last breath in his wings and flew away, uttering as he went a cry of distress. The Spirit of Evil replied with a cry of triumph.

"I awoke, frozen with horror.

"In my chamber lay two bodies—crushed, unrecognisable. My son, informed by his *fiancée*, had tried to protect her in her flight, and my criminal snare had destroyed them both. It was Christmas, twenty years ago!"

Saying this he made a sign to the negro tending the precious lamp to cease feeding its flame.

"I have made confession," he added, "and can now die; but will God forgive me?"



"DIPPED IT IN THE BRIGHTLY FLAMING LAMP."

At that moment the bells of the château pealed forth and the voices of the singers in the church were heard. The doors of the great hall opened. At the back of the chapel of the old manor, resplendent with lights, the infant Jesus, lying upon his bed of straw, appeared, radiant with celestial glory.

The old Duke fell on his knees before the infant Deity.

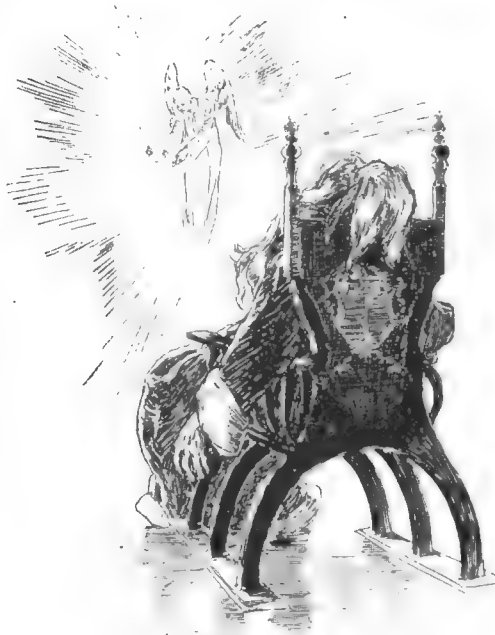
"Man," said the voice of the priest, "Jesus was born to suffer, and died for the redemption of

sinners. You have sinned, you have suffered, you have repented—God forgives you. Your soul pass from you in peace."

Then the old man turned his eyes towards the lamp, above which an angel with white wings was hovering. That angel he recognised—it was the guardian of the brilliant lamp.

The angel smiled sweetly and took within his wings the expiring flame, with which he flew heavenwards.

The Duc de Kerberzoff was dead!



Paris.

Jeune femme à l'attention  
 Il s'ensuit que le lieu.  
 Le Duc de Kerberzoff  
 était mort !

Charles Berberzoff  
 1880

Boston

## The Queer Side of Things.



**R**EADER, can you, by a violent effort of memory, recall the two spirits, William and James, who engaged in these pages in several arguments concerning the possibility of your, and my, existence? I know you have had other things to think about lately—the possibility of obtaining, either by exorbitant payment, diplomacy, or any means under-hand or otherwise, a supply of coals for the winter—the fate of Lobengula—the chances of the Employers' Liability Bill—the state of our Navy. But if you will for one moment compare the weight of these trivialities with that of the question: "Is it, or is it not, possible for this Universe to have ever existed?"—you will find the former group of subjects vanish like an idle dream; while the VAST QUERY will instantly absorb your whole attention.

Then you will recollect that the more thoughtful, more logical, less visionary spirit William conclusively proved the impossibility of our existence.

Yet he was wrong. Very slight inquiries into evidence have since convinced me that our Universe *does* exist. It is difficult to credit, in the face of William's logic: but I fear we *must* believe it.

Very well—waiving the possibility of our *all* being hypnotized through all the ages (say by Adam, Rameses the Great, Mr. Stead, or some other power having sway over human minds) into a belief of the existence of the non-existent—we will, please, take it as

carried that we *do* exist, and that even William is forced to admit it. Very good: now let's get on.

"What do you think *now*?" asked James, a weak-minded scintillation of triumph in his eye.

William was evidently seriously offended; facts which contradict carefully-weighted logic, flawless in all other respects, are always irritating to the thoughtful. Men of science will indorse this.

"Hurrn!" he said at last; "your Universe does exist—in a way; and the globe you call 'Terra' does exist—in a way. But the highly objectionable creatures on it don't seem too comfortable; in fact, a more ridiculous, calamitous, disastrous, pitiful, gruesome, repulsive muddle than they make of it I could not possibly conceive!"

"But they have *some* reasonable qualities?" argued James.

"A few," said William. "Those taught them by the conduct of what you call the lower animals. I know what's principally wrong with them—they *think*, and *do things*, too much."

"Well, they are, perhaps, too much given to thinking and doing things. I admit that they make many mistakes, but I *do* protest that they *mean well*—that their theories are, as a whole, in the right direction—that they have a solid, genuine admiration for good aims and great deeds, and reward such merits when conspicuously shown by *any* among them."

"Hum!" said William.

"Oh, come," said James; "you *must*

admit that humanity's rewards are, as a rule, conferred on those who do the greatest services to humanity."

"From *my* point of view, yes!" said William.

"Let's have a game!" he said, suddenly.

"A game?" said James, taken aback by such a proposition from the cynical and severe William.

"Yes," said the latter. "Let us put this point of yours to the test. Let you and me select, each, a specimen of humanity from among this herd, each of us choosing the specimen which he deems most likely to obtain the highest praises and rewards of humanity; let us choose our specimens as babies, and watch them through their subsequent careers—eh?"

"Very good," said James, confidently.

"Let's have a bet on it, like your humans do with insurance companies about the length of their lives," said William. "I will bet you—let's see—I'll bet you that comet against that little star over there in the constellation like a saucepan. The comet's more showy, and apparently better value; so that will please *you* best: and you won't notice its flimsiness as compared with the greater solidity of the little star."

"But what nonsense!" said James. "What in space would be the use of a comet or a star to one of us? What could we do with it?"

"You could give yours," said William, in that nasty tone of his, "to one of your humans. He would be delighted. It's exactly the kind of thing they are always longing for."

Then they looked about among humanity.

"I've chosen my baby," said James. "Something has gone wrong with another baby's feeding-bottle, and my baby is trying to put it right."

"Very curious!" said William. "The baby I had chosen is the very baby whose feeding-bottle—(anachronism is nothing to *us*, James—we deal with *all* dates)—your baby is attempting to put right. While your baby is so engaged, *my* baby is damaging the tube of *your* baby's bottle, to the end that your baby may fail to get any

nourishment through it. That's the baby for *me*!"

James laughed in derision. "Well, if you think *your* choice will merit the praise of humanity——!" he began.

"Stop!" said William. "The words in our agreement were '*obtain* the praises of humanity.' We said nothing about *meriting* them. I say my choice will obtain them."

"Well, well," said James, "you needn't split hairs!"

"I'm not splitting hairs," replied William; "I am pointing out the chasm between two mountains."

"But—confound it!" said James, impatient at his companion's want of reason. "You don't mean to seriously tell me that you seriously believe that humanity would seriously choose to reward those who injure rather than those who benefit——?"

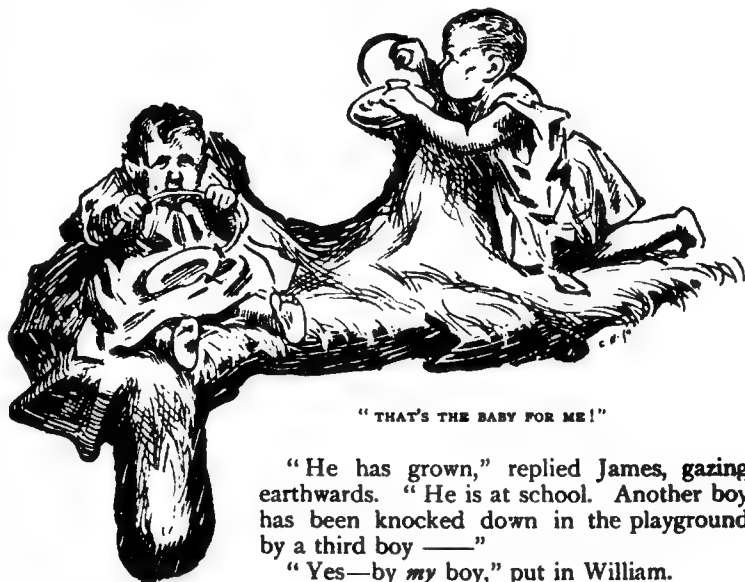
"Never mind what I believe. You'll see," said William. "See, our babies are growing; they are little boys now. What's yours doing?"

"Mine," said James, triumphantly, "has found a dead bird, and is trying to bring it to life."

"That is the bird which *my* little boy has killed," said William.

James sniggered again. "You had better make another choice," he said.

"*Will* you kindly mind your own business," said William, "and look after your chance of that comet? You'd better be ordering a handsome casket to present it to your baby in *when* he has obtained the praises of humanity. What's your baby up to now?"



"THAT'S THE BABY FOR ME!"

"He has grown," replied James, gazing earthwards. "He is at school. Another boy has been knocked down in the playground by a third boy——"

"Yes—by *my* boy," put in William.





"FOUND A DEAD BIRD."

"And my boy is attending to his bruises and trying to ease the pain of them."

"Just so," said William. "A most mistaken young person! I knew he would—just the sort of thing he *would* be up to!"

"At any rate, he is earning the gratitude of the victim," protested James.

"The gratitude of victims," said the objectionable William, "is not legal tender; it is not even a marketable article. Did you ever see the gratitude of victims quoted in the share-lists of the newspapers published by your precious humans? Have you ever seen it advertised for in the columns of that periodical of theirs called *Exchange and Mart*? You may have seen it advertised

for sale there; but there were no answers. Now look at *my* boy, James—look at him! That's promise, if you like! He's knocking down *all* the other boys like ninepins."

"Your boy is a Bully," said James.

"Ah! you've discovered it, then? It has at last dawned upon you that I am bound to win. My boy is a Bully. You may as well just hand over that little star out of the saucepan at once, and save further trouble."

"What! *Do* you mean to tell me," screamed James, rising on the tips of his toes with indignation, "to tell me that a Bully is the sort of person to obtain the highest praises and rewards of his fellow-creatures?"

"I do," said William. "The sort, and the *only* sort. I'll grant that your beneficent person who does a lot of good to your humans may come in for a good large amount of praises, and also even get a small amount of solid rewards: but the fellow they really love is your Bully."

"How can they love him? Impossible!" said James.

"Then why do the confounded creatures act as though they did? You can only judge of their sanity by their acts—and those disprove it. Let's go on. What's my boy doing now?"

"He is playing with a lot of little toy soldiers," said James. "He is knocking them over with toy cannon. Now he is constructing little toy towns, and setting fire to them."

"And your boy?"

"Is picking up the little soldiers, and trying to bend them straight and set them on their legs again."

"Ah! Always throwing away your chances of winning that comet by wasting his time earning the gratitude of victims!" said the horrid William. "And now they have both left school, and are studying. My boy is practising sword-cuts, and reading about words of command, and linked battalions and machine-guns."



"HE'S KNOCKING DOWN ALL THE OTHER BOYS LIKE NINEPINS."

"And my boy is practising tying bandages, and reading about arteries, and nerves, and compound fractures, and epidemics. My boy is fitting himself as a Healer."

"And my boy," said William, "is fitting himself for a Slayer."

"You are either mad," said James, "or are indulging in a pastime which is not your *forte*—a jest. You cannot seriously imagine that these humans will actually prefer one who slays them!"

"I *know* they will—it just tallies with their queer ways. They profess to hold human life at the highest value! That's not humbug on their parts, mind you—they are under the delusion that they do so hold it. Life is to them an object of joy, and the absence of it one of regret; as I told you once before, they delight in the filling up of the waste places of their ball with human life. They don't consider animal life as life.

"If an island is full of intelligent elephants, who hardly ever make mistakes, and quiet, domesticated kangaroos, and contented rabbits, these humans of yours say: 'What a pity it isn't inhabited—we ought to people that desert!' They don't recognise the fact that it *is* inhabited and *isn't* a desert! They

are delighted at the growing crowds in their towns; and if they look down a lane and don't see anyone in it, they drop a tear and think: 'It's very sad there should be no human life in that lane.'

"And here comes in one of the queerest phases in the exceeding queerness of these people of yours—all the while they are under the impression that they consider the increase of humanity as of the highest advantage, they have an unrecognised instinct which tells them that things will be mightily uncomfortable for them when their ball gets a little overfilled: and from this unrecognised instinct springs their partiality to anyone who thins them out. The Thinner-Out is the object of their very highest rewards—

"Ha! Look—look there, on that *TERRA* of yours. There's a great ship about to be wrecked—yes, there it goes, crashing on the rocks. There will be a wholesale bit of thinning-out there—no; see, one of your humans, by the exercise of superhuman energy, and at infinite risk to himself, is saving the whole lot of them. Every one of them is safe on land now. They are crowding round their preserver—"

"Ha!" cried James. "Where are your precious cynical arguments *now*? Look at



SLAYER AND HEALER.

their gratitude—look how they grasp his hand, and kiss it, and— —”

“Collect for him a sum amounting to nearly fifty pounds, and send him a medal, and mention him in the principal newspapers—nearly half a column in some!—and drop him,” said William.

“Of course,” he continued, “there are several kinds of Thinners-Out—there’s the one who spreads epidemics by travelling in public conveyances when suffering from communicable ailments: they don’t reward him, because no particular effort is required

for his kind of work—a child could do it: but he is protected by the laws. Who ever heard of anyone being visited by any heavier punishment than the fine of a few coins for wilfully thinning-out humans in this way? Nobody. Then there are two kinds of the class who go in for the most lucrative method of thinning-out—War. There’s the warrior who thins out his fellow-creatures to gratify his own personal inclinations and ambitions; and there’s the warrior who is forced to thin them out by the duty of defending his country against the former kind of warrior.”

“Ah! and the latter’s the kind of warrior his fellow humans will heap the highest rewards upon,” said James.

“Oh, is he?” said William. “All right; for the sake of curiosity let us just follow the career of a third boy—the little one that was knocked down by *my* boy, and tended by yours. What is *he* at now?”

“Why, he is practising with a sword like your Bully; only he is practising parries instead of cuts; and he is also reading about words of command, and linked battalions, and machine-guns, and fortifications. And I recollect, by the way, that he was lately playing with a little toy town and trying to defend it.”

“Just so,” said William. “He’ll do very well, mind you; but the other kind of warrior—my Bully—will distance him in rewards by leagues. Halloa!—there’s a booming of cannon, and a noise of screaming. What’s doing?”

“It’s your Bully. He’s an adult human now; and he’s besieging a town; now he has taken it and set it on fire, and put the inhabitants to the sword.”

“That’s the way to begin, James! If you want to win the love and respect of those humans of yours, strike terror into them at the start. You see, those you spare feel so proud of their own cleverness in being spared, and so relieved about it, that they are in the best of humours; and, looking about for somebody on whom to expend their good humour, they naturally fix on the figure that catches their eye first; and that, of course, is the figure of the Thinner-Out. See?”

“Your beastly baby is taking more towns,

and kindly accepting ransoms for abstaining from destroying what never was his."

"Yes; and from a corner of the earth comes out the other boy who studied war; and he stands in front of the one-half of the earth where he lives, to prevent the Bully attacking it; and now there's a great battle—another—another—and another, and my baby is beaten back from one-half of that globe of yours, and the other baby stands in the middle of that half and crows; and my baby, the Bully, has to confine his attention to the half he has overrun and conquered, while a wild, delirious, long-pent-up shout of heartfelt relief comes up from the humans on the defended half. Where's that baby of yours—the doctor?"

"There he is," said James; "there he is—picking up the damaged soldiers and trying to bend them straight and set them on their legs again; checking epidemics and diseases arising from the privations and calamities of war, assuaging suffering, and curing and comforting thousands. You'll lose your comet, William—come, confess it!"

"Bah!" said William. "You don't know much of the ways of this pet fancy of yours, the inhabitants of that globule. See—they are about to show their gratitude to our three babies by conferring rewards——"

"They're looking towards my baby, the Healer!" shouted James, excitedly.

Even William was interested out of his wonted calm by the situation.

"They're handing him something done up in paper. What is it?" he shouted.

"A baronetcy—there!" shouted James. "And now they're turning to

the Thinner-Out who defended one-half of the world! See—what's that they hand to him?"

"A dukedom!" shouted William. "Wait a bit—wait a bit—don't crowd on to my toes—you can see where you are. Now—they're turning towards——"

"Your Bully, the Champion Thinner-Out. They're handing him—don't shove——"

"Well—what?" screamed William.

"An Imperial Crown!" gasped James.



Reader, if you do not believe in William's theory, search your "Burke" for a physician qualified to sit in the House of Lords.

J. F. SULLIVAN.



### A FAIRY STORY FOR CHILDREN.

**T**HE VIZIER ALI-BEN-HASSAN, Prime Minister of the Calif Amgiad, was one day walking in the country in the environs of Bagdad. Since the morning he had met with nothing but vexations. In the first place, he had slept ill. Then his first-born, his son, Nouredin, had left his home the previous evening, and had returned, after sunrise, shamefully tipsy; clearly indicating that he was leagued with the evil-livers of Bagdad, and had infringed the wise law of the Prophet, forbidding the use of wine and strong liquors.

Then, again, the servant intrusted with the duty of accompanying his daughter to the bath had, on her return, confided to him that, for the fifth time in as many days, a young man, with a self-satisfied air, had, as if by chance, thrown himself in their way; and that, in passing, Amine, under pretence of

arranging her veil, had, on the contrary, deranged it in such a manner as to allow this good-looking stranger to behold her radiant visage; a proceeding which, on the part of a Mahometan young lady, constituted a grave departure from the rules of good conduct.

Already considerably put out of temper by all these worries, Ali had gone to the sitting of the Council. There he had found himself in the presence of the Calif Amgiad, and the Calif Amgiad had received him anything but pleasantly.

A short time before, a sedition had broken out in a neighbouring province. Ali, after having severely repressed it, had not thought it worth while to bring the matter before his glorious master. But the Minister's enemies had not been equally reserved, and the Calif had vehemently reproached his Minister: firstly, with having allowed a sedition to break out in his kingdom; secondly, with having hidden the fact from him; and thirdly, with



having put it down by force, instead of by persuasion—which, indeed, *is* preferable, but, unfortunately, does not always prove successful.

On quitting the Council, Ali bore with him this impression—always painful to a statesman—that his credit was considerably shaken.

He had no sooner returned home than his wife had quarrelled with him, accusing him of niggardliness in the sum he allowed her for her dress, declaring that the wife of the governor of the palace was better dressed than she, and affirming that, in fact, she had nothing to put on. Ali bowed his head before this storm, and ordered his servants to serve him a collation, in the hope of finding in the pleasures of good cheer a compensation for the vexations of his public and private life; but, by an unlucky chance, his cook that day omitted every dish of which he was fond.

Desperate, Ali quitted his house, left the city, and strayed into the country. There, at least, he might fret and fume at his ease.

"Truly," he muttered, as he went along, "there are days when one would like to make an end of one's existence. Of what use to one is life?—nothing but to make one angry with everything!"

Meanwhile, a burning sun was scorching the road on which he was walking; and it was not long before he felt an irrepressible desire to find shelter somewhere. But in vain he looked for a shady corner. At length he came in sight of a path which, from its narrowness and turnings, seemed to promise a little coolness. He passed on to it.

The windings of this path conducted him to a ruined wall near which there grew a palm tree. Ali uttered a sigh of relief and stretched himself at the foot of the wall in the shade of the wide leaves.

Doubtless he would soon have fallen asleep had not a buzzing sound come to annoy his sense of hearing. He looked up and saw a pretty, gold-and-green-hued fly gaily wheeling about his head. Wishing to take a nap in peace, Ali drove away the intruder two or three times with his hand; but the obstinate little creature returned again and again to the charge, and ended by impudently perching on the Vizier's nose.

This was too much for Ali, who jerked himself into a sitting posture, and with his hand made a vigorous but unsuccessful dab

at his enemy. But in the hurry of getting away the quick-winged fly did not notice that it was darting straight into a large spider's web, spreading between an angle of the wall and the neighbouring palm tree.

Witness of this catastrophe, the Vizier could not, at first, help feeling glad.

"Now," he thought, "you tiresome insect, you will no longer be able to prevent me from getting the nap I want."

But, as he continued to watch the fate of the pretty, gold-green fly,

he saw emerge from a crack in the wall a monstrous spider, with a body as big as the finger-tip of a man, and long, black, and hairy limbs. It rushed towards its prey, and set to work spinning a winding-sheet of web about it, as if enjoying its victim's terror and agony.



"ALI MADE A VIGOROUS BUT UNSUCCESSFUL DAB AT HIS ENEMY."

The poor fly made such desperate efforts to free itself from its bonds that Ali, at the sight of its hopeless exertion, felt moved by compassion; and though he was very tired, and in spite of the little insect having so recently worried him considerably, he could not bring himself to allow it to perish so miserably.

He rose up, and with a wave of his hand

palm tree, closed his eyes, and was soon soundly asleep.

The sound of a voice pronouncing his name aloud awoke him. He opened his eyes and saw, standing before him, a personage of dazzling beauty and gigantic form. Two light and transparent wings were attached to his shoulders. Ali had no doubt that he was in the presence of a genie.



"A GENIE."

frightened away the spider, after which he released the fly from its perilous captivity.

"Now," he said, "I hope you will leave me in peace."

He opened his finger and thumb, the fly flew away, and Ali speedily lost sight of it. He then lay down again in the shade of the

"Vizier," said the supernatural being, "you have rendered me a great service. I was the fly which lately buzzed about your nose. I took that form for the purpose of relieving myself for awhile from my ordinary greatness, and flitting freely in the sunshine. A malicious sorcerer, my private enemy,

wishing to take advantage of this circumstance, changed himself into the big spider in whose web I became entangled, and in which I should have fared ill but for your assistance.

"You must know that, though we are permitted to assume what appearance we please, we at the same time run the risk of falling into the same snares as the human creatures whose resemblance we borrow; and, if we so fall, we can only be rescued by human aid. It is, therefore, by your generous intervention I have been saved. In return for this great service, ask of me some favour: whatever it may be, I promise to grant it."

So spoke the genie. The Vizier remained for a while without answering. At length, after having reflected, he said:—

"I was saying to myself, only a short time back, that long life was no advantage, since so many of our days are spoiled by divers vexations; and that it would be better to have a shorter existence, composed exclusively of happy and cloudless days; if, then, it be in your power to do it, good genie, suppress from my life in future all days of affliction, or even of annoyance, and let me live only during those which are exempt from trouble. Do that, and you will have largely repaid me the service I have done you."

On hearing those words an enigmatical smile overspread the face of the genie.

"Have you well weighed your request?"

"Yes," replied Ali.

"Let it be according to your desire!"

Instantly, as it seemed to the Vizier, his fantastic interlocutor seized him by the middle of the body and rose in the air with him to a height so giddy as presently caused him to lose his senses. When he returned to consciousness, he found himself in his house in Bagdad, in bed. His body was straightened out and so rigid that he found himself unable to make the least movement.

His eyes were closed. Nevertheless he saw all that was passing about him, and heard all that was being said. The room was full of people. His wife, his children, his servants were there; all lamented him, and deplored the loss of so good a husband, so good a father, so good a master, a friend so faithful and devoted.

"What is the meaning of all this?" thought Ali. "Am I dead, then?"

"Yes," said a voice.

The genie stood at the foot of the Vizier's bed, visible only to him, reading his thoughts.

"Perfidious spirit!" thought Ali; "is this the way you redeem your promise?"

"Do not accuse me," replied the genie, "but lay the blame to your own stupidity alone. Why did you ask of me what was impossible? Two fairies have been intrusted with the task of spinning the destinies of men. Before one, at the beginning of things, was placed a heap of white wool, from which she spun fortunate days; before the other was placed a heap of black wool, from which she spun the days that were to be unfortunate.

"Now, one night, while they were sleeping, Satan came by and amused himself by mixing together the two heaps of wool, and so thoroughly entangled the whole that the fairies, on awaking, found it impossible to separate the black from the white wool; and, from that time, the days spun by them are of mixed colour—made up of contentments and affliction. Recall the days you have passed: is there one of them on which you have not experienced some satisfaction, small as it may have been?"

"In asking me to take from your days to come all those on which some discomfort may reach you, you have, in fact, asked me to suppress the whole, and you have immediately arrived at the day of deliverance—and death. I am sorry to have had to teach you this lesson, but you have drawn it down upon yourself."

"Unfortunately, it can now be of no use to me, since I am dead," said Ali.

The genie smiled.

"I am good-natured," he replied. "If you like, I will imagine that you have said nothing, carry you back to the spot whence I brought you, and nothing in your life shall be changed. What do you say?"

"I could not wish for anything better," replied the Vizier.

The genie stretched his hands towards him: everything melted from his sight, and, for the second time, he became unconscious. When he recovered the use of his senses, he found himself at the foot of the wall under the shade of the palm tree where he had fallen asleep.

Rising to his feet he asked himself whether this adventure had really happened to him or whether he had simply dreamed it; then, thoughtfully, he made his way back home. While he slept the sun had declined, so that his walk was no longer rendered unpleasant.

On reaching his house, Ali learned that his son, Nourredin, had been made so ill by his overnight's excesses that he had vowed never, thenceforth, to drink anything but water. He also learned that the young man

whom his daughter had so frequently met on her way to and from the bath was the son of one of the richest and most important personages in Bagdad, and asked for the hand of Amine in marriage.

Furthermore, he received a message from the Calif Amgiad, the Sovereign, admitting that, on reflection, the conduct of Ali in the matter of the sedition had appeared

The wife of the Vizier having paid a visit to the wife of the governor of the palace and seen, with her own eyes, that the last new dress of that lady was an utter failure, was now in a delightfully amiable temper. Finally, the cook had determined to make up in a striking manner for his short-comings of the morning, and served up an exquisite repast.

So ended, in the happiest way in the world,



"A VISIT TO THE WIFE OF THE GOVERNOR."

to him to have been both prudent and firm; and conveying the assurance that he might consider himself to be more in favour than ever.

a day begun so adversely; and the Vizier, on retiring to bed, confessed within himself that the genie, real or imaginary, had given him some sage advice.

# Electrocution.

## A SCOTCH ADVENTURE.

BY PAUL CRAY.



LAST summer I was stewing away in the office and wondering what crime I—or my representative in some former state—had committed to be doomed to such a life, when one morning I received a note from my old friend, Tommy Cameron, of Clinton. He begged me to come and stay with him for a month; "the shooting is excellent," he said. I will not bore you with details. After a deal of trouble I arranged it with the chief, and alighted at D—y Station at the close of a lovely September day. Cameron met me at the station, and after an hour's drive through most beautiful country we reached Clinton.

Well! at dinner that evening, I found that the company of young ladies who were simply bubbling over with animal spirits was charming; much more so than the lonely bites I had all along made out to enjoy so at my club. I soon found myself wondering what peculiar form of mental disease had been upon me when I had joined the club; but so strangely are we constituted that at the same time I was asking myself how I could withstand the wiles of Beauty—such as theirs—for a whole month, and refrain from bringing discredit on this honourable concern.

I got on fairly well during the first week, as I kept with Cameron most of the time.

Whether he gave me away or not, I cannot say, but they seemed to know I was shunning them, and they tried every dodge—as only women know how—to draw me out. You may laugh, but I was utterly helpless.

I struggled hard against what I now consider my natural self, but it was too strong for me. One by one all the theories and arguments that I had fed on disappeared, melted by the sunny eyes of these girls; they would not bear inspection by their light, and I, as if to make up for lost time, fell to my task of ladies' man with a zest that would have shamed any professional at the game. To add to the hopelessness of the situation, Tommy was away for several days in the



"THROUGH BEAUTIFUL COUNTRY."

Here a surprise awaited me, for, in my ignorance, I had expected to have none but male society during my stay; but on entering the house two young ladies came forward to greet us; they were the Miss Camerons, and kept house for their brother. He had not mentioned them in the invite, he said, lest I should refuse on conscientious grounds.

second week, and I was entirely at their mercy.

As I said, there were two of them, Madge and Floss. Madge was the younger and prettier: she represented the musical and artistic instincts; Floss, on the other hand, was the manager: she had the brains of the establishment. She was very nice, but she

went in for such awful things ; she had some favourite toads in the conservatory, and she would go rambling about the country and bring home all sorts of animals, insects, and other unthinkable things—and cut them up !—imagine a girl doing that ! Sometimes at dinner she would rip out with some new and startling information concerning the internal arrangements of this or that animal ; or she would take us to her study, where she had whole rows of bottled specimens, and would point out the peculiarity of any new specimen, while on her work-table you might see various organisms in a state of partial dissolution, and on these she would dilate until I, not being used to it, began to feel just a bit queer. Yes, this girl was decidedly too clever.

The other one, as I said, was not so heavy, and went in for art ; and, as you know, I have a little leaning in that direction myself. It was natural, therefore, that when she told me she was going to paint a little river scene near the house, I should ask if I might be of use. I obtained permission to wait on her, and we started the picture. Now, you must know that if a fellow and a girl who are both a bit sweet on things artistic get together and talk about them, and paint, they stand a good chance of getting sweet on each other. Well, that is just about what happened ; the picture didn't advance much—she didn't seem to mind, and I'm sure I didn't.

In this pleasant way the days passed until Cameron's return, when, of course, there were innovations. We would have a day's fishing, and then a day at shooting, or a long tramp over the hills ; but, to be frank, I liked those little bits artistic much more than fishing or shooting, and when out on the hills would wish myself back at Madge's side.

When out on one of these early morning tramps we met a young fellow who Tommy introduced as Arthur Clisby, a friend of his. He greeted us cordially, and after a chat he left us, promising, on being asked, to favour us with his company at dinner that evening. On the way home I learned a little of his history. He was the son of a large ship-owner of Dundee, and was the family failure ; his chief failure, as far as I could gather, being that he couldn't knuckle under. He had been a student at Glasgow University, and had promised to come off well, but his individuality—which always came to the top at the most awkward moments—asserted itself. He was reproved for being a doubter of some

dicta scientific, and for being too much given to asking questions. A violent altercation ensued, during which he called his professor "a musty old heap of fossilized learning." As a result he left Glasgow, and soon after had a quarrel with his father, and having decided that they could not get on together, they agreed to differ—and part. He had come out here into the wilds to live, and devoted his time to abstract scientific problems, chiefly in the electrical line.

At breakfast Madge asked me how I liked the "Hermit." That's what they called him.

"Oh ! he seems a very nice fellow," I answered.

"Yes, he *is* a nice old boy, but he is so very quiet."

Then we fell to chatting of him, and Floss joined in and discussed him, his merits and demerits, just as though he were one of her bottled specimens. Then we talked of other things, and Madge said that she hoped to finish her picture that day if I refrained from helping. But I was determined that she shouldn't work too hard, and it remained unfinished.

Dinner-time came, and with it our guest, but instead of the jolly good fellow of the morning, he was now quiet, oppressively so ; never speaking unless directly addressed, and only then answering with a few quiet, direct words. I never saw a more remarkable change in a man.

We spent an evening as pleasantly as was compatible with the damping influence of his silence, and as he left he pressed me to come and see his place at some early opportunity. "Come in the evening," he said, "as then the lights will be running."

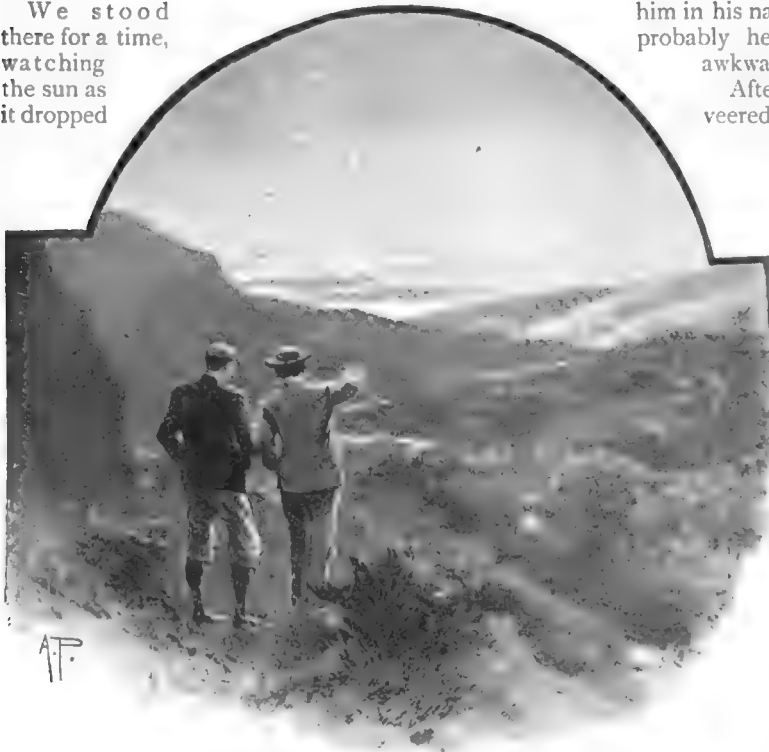
A few days after, having nothing particular in view, I determined to avail myself of his invitation, and set off in the direction of the "Hermitage." The path for the whole distance lay by the side of the stream, that fell in a beautiful cascade into the lake in Cameron's grounds. I had not far to go, and had almost reached the place, when I was much startled by a piece of rock—as big as a football—which, falling from the top of an almost perpendicular bank twenty feet above me, alighted almost at my feet.

Keeping my eyes open to guard against a possible repetition, I went on, and on turning a slight bend I saw our friend, the hermit, standing with folded arms on some high ground close by. As soon as he saw me he came eagerly forward, taking off his hat with quite a French flourish.



"It's rather strange," he said, "but I was half expecting you would come to-night." I made no answer to this, and he continued: "I came out here to see the sunset. I come here every night for a time: it has a soothing effect after the excitement of the laboratory."

We stood there for a time, watching the sun as it dropped



"WE STOOD THERE FOR A TIME."

behind the distant hills, and the sky as it turned from yellow to orange and from orange to red; then it went grey and the light died out. The house was an unpretentious concern, but was eloquent of the individuality of its master. The top floor had been turned into one large room, and this he used as a laboratory; it was a literal armoury of scientific apparatus; splendid electrical and chemical apparatus filled the shelves and tables, and in the centre on a raised platform stood a large astronomical telescope; while electric glow-lamps with frosted bulbs threw a soft light all around.

He told me the names and the use of the numerous beautiful instruments, and talked of the progress he had made in certain experiments. Here this otherwise somewhat eccentric man was at his best, and as we sat there talking—he with face flushed,

his eyes sparkling, and his tongue speaking with an eloquence born of enthusiasm, I more than once thought that if Madge could see him thus, she would not then say, "He is so very quiet." All men are the same; we cannot hope to shine in everything, and before we judge a man we should see him in his natural environment, or probably he will appear to us awkward, or even stupid.

After a time the talk veered round to electrical executions, and he said:—

"You may remember, perhaps, the first man they executed in this way in New York State, and what a fearful hash they made of it? I was there and saw it all: it was simply awful. Revolting! The doctors, bah! they're fools. They thought they understood it all, and applied the death current at what they considered were the nerve centres, the top of the head and the base of the spine. Nerve centres, forsooth!

—the parts of the

whole human system that offer the greatest resistance to the passage of a current; whereas if they had only used their common-sense and powers of observation, they would at once have found that in ninety cases in every hundred of the fatal accidents in New York alone, the fatal shock was received through the hands, for the hands and arms being muscular are full of blood, and therefore good conductors. But, no, they persisted in their pig-headed course, and as a result Kemmler was done to death in a horrible manner. Immediately after witnessing this revolting sight, I set to work to devise an appliance that would administer the death penalty with the minimum amount of torture, both bodily and mental, to the criminal. There is no doubt that before Kemmler was bungled out of existence he suffered far more torture mentally than bodily—the months of suspense and all the fears that

ignorance could conjure up had made him as a maniac.

"I have worked at this scheme for a year, and am now only awaiting the carrying out of certain legal formalities before submitting my plans to the authorities. We will now take a look at the apparatus itself."

We left the house, and he led the way across the open until we stopped at a door. He entered, and after groping for a moment found the switch, and immediately the place was full of light. At this moment I was conscious of an irritating sensation in my throat. I coughed: he noticed it, laughed, and said:—

"It's the gas from the batteries you can feel—this is the battery-room; these cells are now running the lights in the house and those here. Accumulators are a great convenience, as they make night labour unnecessary."

I noticed that this room was partly cut out from the rock and partly built, as were the others that I afterwards saw.

Passing through a passage we entered a larger room.

"This is the turbine-house," said he. "There are sluices running from here to the stream a hundred yards away, and when it has done its work, the water leaves by two tunnels beneath the floor and joins the main stream lower down. This is the dynamo specially designed for execution purposes." And he pointed to a piece of apparatus that resembled somewhat a large, slender wheel, with numerous fine spokes. "See, I will set the thing running, and let you see it working." He unscrewed the valves, the governors began to spin and the dynamo to hum, so quickly did it run. "Not much noise, is there?" was his next remark, "and there is

two hundred horse-power latent in this apparatus. Let us now examine the lethal chamber and the seat of justice."

He opened a door and brought into view a small room in which stood a remarkable piece of furniture. He was about to enter when he stopped suddenly. "Half a moment, though; I must slacken those valves a bit," he said, and stepped over to the turbines. I entered and began curiously to examine his invention; next moment there was a sharp click, and, turning, I found the door closed on me.

A moment more and I was clutching wildly at my throat, and fell to the ground—choking. I didn't choke, however, for, some time afterwards, I became conscious, and when I had collected my scattered wits I found myself seated in his horrible chair—strapped in. "This is a little joke of his," I thought; "but this confounded chair is not at all comfortable."

I tried to free myself, but I was firmly held, my hands were each fixed in a kind of vice, leather outside and metal within, as I could tell by the feel. These things were hollow, and like large mittens, and within them and inclosing my hands was some

liquid—mercury I afterwards discovered. My legs and body were fastened by straps, and my arms were inclosed in a kind of tube at each side of the chair. As I took in these details the door opened, and Clisby appeared.

"Ha! ha! my fine bird, you're caged at last, are you?"

"Don't stand fooling there," I muttered; "your infernal chair is breaking my back."

"Oh! is it? We'll soon alter that."

He stepped to my side, but instead of releasing me he simply loosened



"CLUTCHING WILDLY AT MY THROAT."

the straps at my back. This was too much for me; I yelled at him that unless he freed me instantly, I would simply smash him when I did get free.

Nice way to treat a guest, wasn't it? For answer he laughed, shrugged his shoulders, and said: "When you have finished your abuse, I will favour you with my intentions"—and continuing: "You fancy I am your friend, don't you?—I am not. I am your enemy. I hate you. You thought to win Madge Cameron from me, and so far you have succeeded. I have seen you, have watched you, when you and her were out on the pretence of painting. Perhaps you did not know I loved her, but all the same you tried to win her, and I hate you for it. I am glad I didn't hurt you with that piece of rock, as now I shall be able to see how you can die. I might have killed you a while ago, before I turned on the oxygen and you revived; I had my hand on the switch, but, no, I let you revive to tell you this, to torture you the more, for have not you stolen my Madge's love from me? Oh! how I hate you! Oh! Madge! Madge!" he cried, "Oh! why will you not love me?"

He then commenced muttering and cursing me under his breath, and walked round me, after which he came and stood at my feet, folded his arms, and stared at me.

"Do you think I am going to be an outcast from society for nothing?" he hissed. "Think you I have spent a whole year in making this thing for nothing? No! no! I will be revenged on someone, and why not on you? Besides, I hate you, for what have you done? I have waited long for a subject, but at last I can operate, and on *you*. No! no! I don't invent things for nothing, not I."

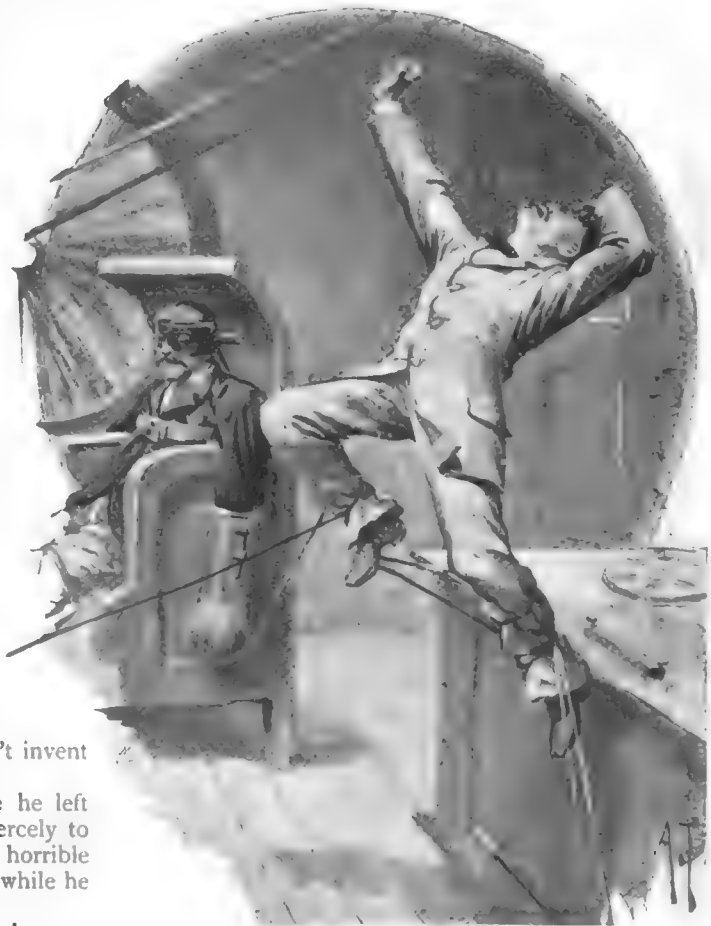
With a horrible chuckle he left me. Again I struggled fiercely to free myself; but, no, those horrible mittens held me. After a while he returned.

"You have just half an hour to

live: it is half-past eleven now; on the stroke of twelve I complete the circuit and you will fizzle up."

Again he left me, a prey to horrible thoughts. Was there no way of escape? Would no one come in time? And the time passed on. The best of us don't care to die before our time, and I had not been any of the best—and what a horrible death I had to die! More than this, I loved Madge—I wanted to live for *her*, and this madman would make me die for her. The time was almost up, and Clisby returned. He was all smiles; he asked me if I had any wish he might carry out for me. I shook my head. He offered me brandy, and I gulped it down, and more, and I drank that also. Then he began to mutter and laugh to himself until he worked himself up into a frenzy, and danced and raved round me like a fury.

"One minute more," he yelled, "and I send you to Jericho."



"A DREADFUL SCREAM BROKE FROM HIS LIPS."

He walked towards the switch—to kill me—and I sat there looking at him. I could not remove my eyes, I was fascinated. And then I saw—I saw his feet catch in the wires that led from the switch to my hands, and he fell. As he did so he clutched at the air, and both his hands came down on the switch contacts. A dreadful scream broke from his lips, and he bounded up quite six feet in the air, and then fell backwards right into the middle of a large flat distribution table. Then I saw a quick succession of blue flashes, and a thin column of steam ascended to the roof. Immediately after this the band came off the dynamo pulley and the humming ceased.

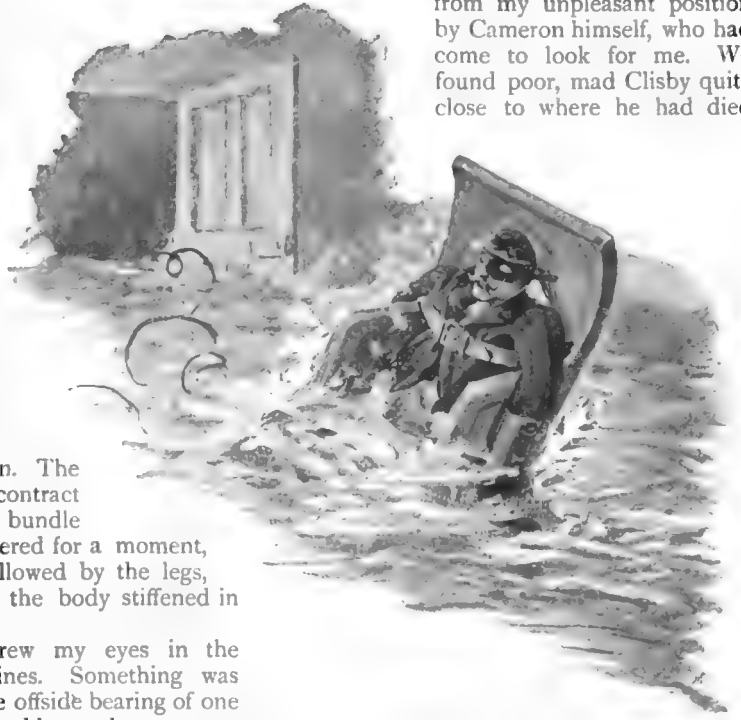
By this time the brandy began to act, but in a remarkable way: my head and body felt as though they were on fire, but my brain was perfectly clear. I looked again at the corpse on the table. See! it was moving. After the cessation of the current, reaction had set in. The corpse continued to contract until it looked like a bundle of singed rags; it shivered for a moment, and then the arms, followed by the legs, shot out straight, and the body stiffened in this position.

A grating sound drew my eyes in the direction of the turbines. Something was wrong evidently, for the offside bearing of one of them was literally red-hot; the governor was wrecked, and the wheel was racing away and increasing in speed every moment. It was not long before something happened. There was a loud snap and then a crash, and I saw the steel casing ripped up like paper, and the water came pouring into the room thousands of gallons per minute. Of what avail was Clisby's death and my escape if I was to be drowned like a rat in a trap?

Slowly the water rose until, when it was about six feet deep, the lights went out. I was floating about in the chair, but I was anchored to the switchboard by the wires. The water continued to rise, though very slowly, as it had to fill all the other rooms and passages. Beneath me I could still

hear the undamaged turbine thrashing away, and I rose until my head, or rather the top of the chair, was scraping the roof, when suddenly I felt that I was falling, and I was carried rapidly towards the door.

The wires held for a moment, but the jerk snapped them, and I sailed along the passage, through the battery-room, and out into the open, where, after being whirled round a few times, I was left high and dry till the morning. The weight of the water had burst open the outer door, hence my sudden exit. I was rescued from my unpleasant position by Cameron himself, who had come to look for me. We found poor, mad Clisby quite close to where he had died



"BEING WHIRLED ROUND."

tangled up in some wire, and the same ghastly smile was on his face.

No one but Cameron ever knew what had really happened on that awful night. We told the girls that an accident had happened, and that the Hermit was dead.

When I look back on the concentrated horror of those long hours, I marvel that I kept my reason. For a week I lost the proper use of my limbs owing to my cramped-up state when in that chair of his, but before I left Clinton, Madge and I found time to finish our picture, and to arrange a little matter that is to come off in the summer.

## Lenster's - End.

BY MRS. E. NEWMAN.

**D**O you mean that your love is given to another?"

"No!" simply and directly.

"You cannot return mine?"

"No, not that!" as simply and directly.

"Then let the rest be what it may," ejaculated Niel Dorrington, in a tone of glad relief, putting his arms about the young girl. "Ah, Daphne, mine! I was so terribly afraid."

With a movement of withdrawal, too decided to be set at naught by the man who loved her, she stood free again. Slight, tall, delicately beautiful, and something more—a woman with whom a man might trust his honour and his life; so thought Niel Dorrington and such others as could read Daphne Ward aright.

She owed little to the pretty bravery of the toilette, with which girls of her age—she was not nineteen—naturally like to adorn themselves. To those of the guests who did not know her position—that of reader and amanuensis to old Mrs. Bellamy—she appeared that day too simply, not to say severely, attired for the occasion: a garden party in the grounds of her employer's spacious river-side domain on the banks of the Thames, just beyond Hampton.

"There is something else," murmured Daphne, the colour rushing to her cheeks and as quickly deserting them again, leaving her paler than before. "I must say it—you are Mrs. Bellamy's nearest relative—her heir; and your people are proud. Ah, listen: I too have my pride, Mr. Dorrington; I would not enter a family where I was not welcome."

"You would be; you shall be, and——"

"You do not know," she hurriedly put in. "I have not told you all. There is another reason why it could not be."

"Miss Ward," said a man-servant, approaching.

"Yes, I am here, James."

"I was to say that Mrs. Bellamy wishes you to go to her on the lawn immediately, if you please."

"I will go with you, Daphne," said Niel, as she turned to follow the man, drawing her hand over his arm.

She understood what was in his mind: he was going to make his intention evident at once before the assembled guests. "I must go alone," she replied, with gentle persistence, but with a grateful upward look into his eyes. "I will write."

"When?"

"To-morrow we shall be preparing, and the next day we go down to the Hall. I cannot promise until Friday." Was she unconsciously to herself glad of the little respite?

"Three days!" he ejaculated. "But you must remember that whatever the mysterious reason may be, it will make no difference now. Having acknowledged the one thing of importance, you are mine—by right divine, mine!"

"I must go—good-bye," she whispered, with faltering lips, adding to herself, "Good-bye, my love, good-bye!"

"Daphne!" he exclaimed, noting the change in her face. "It is not that you have taken some foolish notion into your mind about money or position? You are not so unjust as that to me, I hope. A proper pride is all very well; I cannot blame you for meeting pride with pride; but I cannot allow it to interfere to prevent our future happiness. You know me, and you know what value I set upon the accidental advantages of life in comparison with——"

"Yes, I know you, and—and—you will understand when you receive my letter."

Once more withdrawing her hand, she turned into a trellised walk, and swiftly made her way to the lawn where sat Mrs. Bellamy in conversation with two or three of her guests, but not too absorbed to take keen note of the young girl as she advanced.

A lady of about sixty years of age, with white hair, still fine complexion, and the air of one who had always been accustomed to the position she was now in—Mrs. Bellamy was considered, and considered herself, to possess more than ordinary mental power, and was not a little proud of her knowledge of character and capability of managing those about her.

"James says you want me, Mrs. Bellamy."

"I hope I have not taken you from some young girl friend, Miss Ward," with the gentle suavity which Daphne understood was nevertheless meant to convey a reproof. Mrs. Bellamy was, in fact, quite aware with whom Daphne had been.

"I was talking to Mr. Dorrington," replied Daphne, a little brusquely; telling herself that the other could not suppose that any girl there could be a friend of hers.

"I might have known that she would blurt out the truth, as her way is," thought



"SHE TURNED INTO A TRELLISED WALK."

Mrs. Bellamy ; adding to Daphne, "Will you be good enough to help Mrs. Grant in dispensing the tea, Miss Ward ? I think she will be glad of your assistance just now."

Not sorry to escape from the little lady's cold, keen scrutiny, Daphne went off to do her bidding.

Mrs. Bellamy looked after her as she went with more complacent eyes. "Nothing serious as yet," she was thinking. "No sign of the triumph any girl would feel at having won a lover such as Niel. All the same, it would have been wiser to keep her to the tea-room. There is not a girl here to compare with her ; and Master Niel has the Dorrington good taste in such matters, besides being very human. Yes ; I shall have to be very careful if I keep her ; and I want to do that if I can ; she is so intelligent, and none could suit me better. But at the first sign of real danger she must go."

"Where is Daphne, Aunt Jane ?" asked Niel, coming up.

"Do you mean Miss Ward ?" with an angry frown.

"Of course I do," endeavouring to speak lightly, but with the consciousness that the moment was not propitious for him. "There can be but one Daphne for me, Aunt Jane."

"Miss Ward is helping the housekeeper, as

she ought to have been doing before," coldly. After a glance round, and finding that no one was within earshot, she went on : "I do hope you are not putting any nonsensical ideas into her head, Niel ; it would be very unfair to me, as well as inconsiderate for her, since nothing could possibly come of it" ; slowly and meaningly repeating : "Nothing—could possibly—come of it."

"But I am hoping that something will come of it, Aunt Jane. It is my great desire to make Daphne my wife."

"Your wife ! Miss Ward ? Oh, too absurd."

He felt that he had indeed not chosen the best moment for making his intention known to his aunt. Both were silent a few moments ; she in her disappointment at finding the danger was nearer at hand than she had imagined, and he casting about in his mind for what to say next, so that he might make her understand he was not to be

turned from his purpose.

"I am sorry it should seem that to you," he presently began, "for I am very much in earnest, and—you know me too well to suppose that, having once made up my mind, I am likely to change it."

"My approval is of no importance ?"

"It is of the greatest importance, and I am hoping that when you realize how completely my future happiness depends upon my winning Daphne, you will not withhold your consent."

She closed her lips and looked at him—only looked.

"Come, Aunt Jane ; you have shown your own appreciation of Daphne plainly enough. You know you said you never had so charming a companion." ("That was a great mistake," thought Mrs. Bellamy.) "Surely you are not going to be against me for loving her, and simply because she has no money ?"

"No ; not simply for that, Niel. Who and what are her people ?"

"I don't know, and, to tell the truth"—meeting her eyes with what she had so often admired as the "true Dorrington look"—"I don't care."



"Have you well considered what you have to offer her? Even Miss Ward may not care to share your—expectations."

"I see what you wish me to understand, Aunt Jane. I shall have little enough to offer, but she may prefer even that to—expectations."

"You will both do as you please, of course." Then, with a sudden change of front, speaking in a more genial fashion in order to reassure him, although she had fully made up her mind that Miss Ward must go the very next morning, she went on: "You must run down to the Hall soon, Niel, and we can talk the matter over. Come on Saturday or Monday; we shall have settled down a little by then."

"Will you oblige me by saying nothing about the subject to Daphne in the meantime, Aunt Jane?" not so entirely thrown off his guard as she imagined.

"Oh, certainly, if you do not wish it," cheerfully. "I must find another way," thought the astute little lady; "make her quarrel with me about something. Go she must and shall!"

"I shall be down on Saturday," he said; telling himself that before then he would have got Daphne's letter, and could reply in person. There could be but one thing for him to say—smiling to himself at the thought of allowing anything to come between them now.

He took leave of his aunt, went up to town, and made his way to his chambers in anything but a depressed frame of mind. Every obstacle dwindled into nothingness before the one great fact that Daphne had admitted she cared for him. Not even the remembrance of the tone of that good-bye, and the sad look in her eyes, had the power to discourage him now. She would soon know, he told himself, as, arrived at his chambers, he sprang up the steps two at a time and let himself in.

His rooms had been luxuriously furnished by his aunt. He had tried to make her understand how little he cared for such surroundings; but she had insisted that it was only fitting and right that her nephew and heir should take his place with the best. She had married a millionaire, and had succeeded to his wealth—a childless widow with no other relative than Niel. For him her ambition was great; and before all things she had set her heart upon his marrying well, according to her own notions of what "well" meant. Money he would have in abundance—birth and position his wife must have.

He had been always taught to consider

himself her heir, and he was not ungrateful for all that she had done for him. But not for one moment would she be allowed to interfere to prevent his marrying the woman he loved. As to Daphne's scruples, they must, of course, be overcome. She was afraid of his injuring his prospects with his aunt, perhaps; or there might possibly be some ne'er-do-well of a brother or father. But whatever the difficulty, she would soon understand that it would make no difference to him.

Three days! How could he get through the time? "Ah, Daphne, mine! If you knew what three days apart from you means to me now!" he ejaculated, restlessly pacing the room.

The clock had struck three, and dawn was already breaking, when at length he threw himself on to the bed and fell asleep; his last thought of her accompanying him in his dreams. He was following her now through the winding paths of a deep wood; now they were emerging into the open spaces of what seemed a large park; now making their way through an avenue of old trees; he always following and she eluding him, until at length she was lost. He seemed to be striving to remember the name of a place as someone repeated it to him, and awoke with it on his lips.

"Lenster's-End!"

"I beg your pardon, sir?"

"I am half dreaming, I think, Manning. Lenster's-End?" musingly. "Never heard of such a place."

"I have, sir; a cousin of mine once lived in a family there; and a pretty little place it is—on a branch line of the South-Western."

Niel was a little absently getting through the process of dressing.

"Lenster's-End."

He turned sharply round. The man was not in the room; yet Dorrington could have sworn he heard the words spoken close to him. Imagination—of course it must be that. A word or sentence heard in a dream was apt to follow one in that persistent way, sometimes. To his knowledge, he had never heard of the place before, nor could he recollect anything associated with it. He went into the adjoining room for breakfast; and as he sat over his coffee, the words came floating to him, as though through the open window, across the sounds of the London street:—

"Lenster's-End."

This was becoming absurd. To change the current of his thoughts he opened the



"HE TURNED SHARPLY ROUND—THE MAN WAS NOT IN THE ROOM."

morning's letters, and finding nothing to specially interest him in them, threw them aside and took up the *Times*.

"Lenster's-End."

Dorrington looked not a little surprised. It was not like Manning to speak in this way, unless it was perhaps put as a question: "How far is it down the line, Manning?"

"Lenster's-End? Between forty and fifty miles, sir. It takes its name from Lenster Park, I suppose, because that ends there. A beautiful park it is, with its sweeps and hollows and fine old woods."

"Who is the owner?"

"It did belong to the Lensters for generations; but I don't know how it is now. I think my cousin said something about its being in Chancery."

"Lenster's-End."

No; it certainly was not the man this time. Manning, the sedate and methodical, was quietly about his work of putting out his master's clothes. Dorrington once more took up the *Times*, and resolutely strove to fix his attention upon the morning's news.

"Lenster's-End."

This was too much. "Give me my coat, Manning; I shall lunch at the club."

He presently set forth and walked slowly down towards Pall Mall. Not much longer would he be a loungee at the clubs. His aunt's words had had their effect, although not in the way she had intended; and he knew her too well to think that she would change her mind any more readily than he would change his. He would very soon be hurrying off in the early morning Citywards, on business intent. There was a pleasant little stir in his mind at the thought of doing his share of life's work, and, above all, of doing it for Daphne.

He had arranged it all in his own mind. The principal of his little income of three hundred a year, which had come to him from his mother, must be realized and invested in a partnership in some firm of good standing, to which he could devote all his energies. His training ought to be of some use to him, and he must put his shoulder to the wheel. He would not be marrying a girl accustomed to luxury or with extravagant tastes; and, for himself, he knew how little he cared for such things. With Daphne, his simple, strong, beautiful love, life would be at its highest and best.

"Lenster's-End."

He half-turned his head.

"Oh, nonsense!" he ejaculated, seeing that no one was near him. His thoughts reverted to Daphne again. "I have only to make it quite clear to her that it will be no sacrifice on my part; and I think I shall be able to do that." Nodding across the road to a friend, he smiled to himself at the thought that he would not be much longer on more than bowing acquaintance with the upper ten.

As, on entering the club, he passed the hall porter, the man looked at him with an expression he could not quite understand. It was, in fact, unusual to see even a younger member bound up the steps with the energy of a man on a business errand. He turned into the reading-room, and took up one of the quarterlies.

Suddenly, and now he felt sure the words were spoken by the man sitting opposite to him, he heard again:—

"Lenster's-End."

"What about it?" he exclaimed, loudly and impatiently.

The young man looked up. "Dorrington! Earlier than usual, are you not?"

"What were you saying about Lenster's-End, Weston?"

"Nothing ; and for the best of reasons : I know nothing about Lenster or his end."

Dorrington ruffled up his hair, looking doubtfully at the other.

"Go !"

"Well, I've half a mind to," speaking in reply, and unconsciously, aloud.

"That's not like you, old man. You have at any rate managed to get the credit for having a whole one."

Dorrington said a word to the other ; then took up the thread of thoughts again. "It would be a way of getting through the time ; and there would be a spice of uncertainty—it might be adventure—about it. If there were only a chance of getting a glimpse of Daphne, now, or——"

"The 'Bradshaw' ? Yes, here it is, Dorington."

Had he unconsciously asked for the "Bradshaw," then, or what was it ? Why was he being urged on in this way ? Murmuring a word of thanks to the other, he turned over the leaves, and ran his eye down the pages. "Lenster's-End." Yes, here it was, and the time would serve well enough. But why should he go without purpose on what would probably turn out to be only a fool's errand ?—putting down the book.

"Go !"

He was silent for a moment. Then suddenly and decidedly replied—again it seemed to him in reply—"I will." Rising to his feet, he nodded to the other and went out.

In ten minutes he was at home ; and, bidding the cabman wait, he went in.

"Put a few things into a bag for me, Manning. No, not evening clothes—just brushes, and a change of linen."

"Do you return to-morrow, sir ?"

"Probably—I don't know. Consider yourself free for a couple of days"; telling himself that it would be of no consequence if he returned earlier. It would soon be necessary to dispense with a man altogether ; and it would do him good to be obliged to depend upon himself a little more.

"Where to, sir ?" asked the cabman, as Dorington jumped in.

"Waterloo Station, as quick as you can drive."

Dorrington was in good time to catch the express due at the junction at half-past six. From there a train reached Lenster's-End a little before eight. He noticed that, from the moment he had made up his mind, he was no longer troubled with the mysterious impressions, suggestions, or whatever they were.

He lighted a cigar, sat back in the carriage,

and once more gave all his thoughts to Daphne. How soon would he be able to persuade her to be his wife ? He must first of all show her that he was thoroughly in earnest. He must arrange everything so as to be able to tell her exactly what his prospects were. It seemed to him, the best thing would be to obtain a junior partnership in some respectable firm ; yes, immediately on his return to town, he would go to the family lawyer and ask his advice upon the matter. "I can depend upon old Sherrard. He will endeavour to make me change my mind, of course ; too cute a lawyer to have much romance, but his advice will be valuable on the business side of the question."

By the time he reached the junction, Dorington was on very good terms with himself and the world, not omitting a kindly thought for the aunt who had done so much for him, and meant so well, however mistaken she might be as to what constituted happiness for him. Absorbed in such reflections, he got through the somewhat dreary wait at the junction philosophically enough, and in due course arrived at the Lenster station, his curiosity not a little piqued at what was going to be the upshot of his flying visit there.

"Lenster's-End ? Not more than half a mile's walk, sir ; if you take the short cut—a footpath across the lower end of the park through the woods. That brings you right into Lenster's-End ; and you'll be able to do it before it gets dark if you step out. The first turning out of the lane there, and you'll see the swing gate."

"Will you send this bag to the inn for me ? There is one there, I suppose ?"

"Yes, a good one, sir. You can't do better than put up at the 'Ram's Head.' You'll be right comfortable there."

"Thank you," repeated Dorington.

Turning from the road into a lane, he walked a few yards down it until he came to the swing gate. "Yes, this is better than the dusty road," he thought, as he passed through. After a moment's hesitation—two or three paths branched off from the gate—he took the one which seemed to run in the direction the man had indicated. "Not much traffic here ; people do not seem to avail themselves very frequently of the short cut," he was telling himself, as he noticed how rankly the grass overgrew the path. It was getting dusk, and the wide-spreading old trees shut out nearly all the remaining light there was.

As he walked on in the deepening darkness, the hush of everything around him—

even his own footsteps were soundless on the yielding turf—began to make itself felt. The deep silence was becoming almost oppressive. When, presently, there broke upon the stillness the sound of some creeping thing getting out of his way, and a squirrel scurried off amongst the leaves, he was, for the moment, as startled as though he had heard a pistol-shot. He realized as he had never done before "the trumpet-tongued solitude of the woods."

But glades and open spaces were coming into view, and the moon, almost at its full, was beginning to flood them with its soft white radiance, at the same time rendering the shadow-land in which he walked dimmer and more mysterious.

What a scene! Beyond, amidst the trees, stood out a stately old battlemented stone mansion, looking in this pale light like a monument of the dead past—no sign of life within.

"In Chancery, Manning said—some mystery about it. It looks mysterious enough"—he was thinking. "The whole place has a gloomy, uncanny look about it in this light. If one believed in—— But I am approaching the house; I must have taken the wrong turning, after all. Awkward to lose one's way in a place like this."

He stood still, looking about him in some perplexity for a few moments. Suddenly he became aware that someone was standing beneath a tree near where he was: a man tall, slight, and, so far as he could see in that dim light, elderly, and quaintly attired in the fashion of some forty or fifty years previously. "A gentleman," thought Dorrington.

"Can you put me in the way for the village—Lenster's-End?" he asked, raising his hat, as the other turned slightly towards him.

In a low voice—speaking, Dorrington fancied, like one to whom speech did not come readily—he replied: "Follow me," moving quietly on as he spoke.

"Thank you. A beautiful place this," went on Dorrington, as he turned to accompany the other, passing silently on.

They turned into a broad avenue, bordered by triple rows of elms, running at right angles with the path they had quitted.

"Odd," thought Dorrington; "all this looks quite familiar to me; I seem to have been here before. This avenue, the house, and the lake down there glittering amongst the trees. Where—— Ah, my dream! How like the reality!"

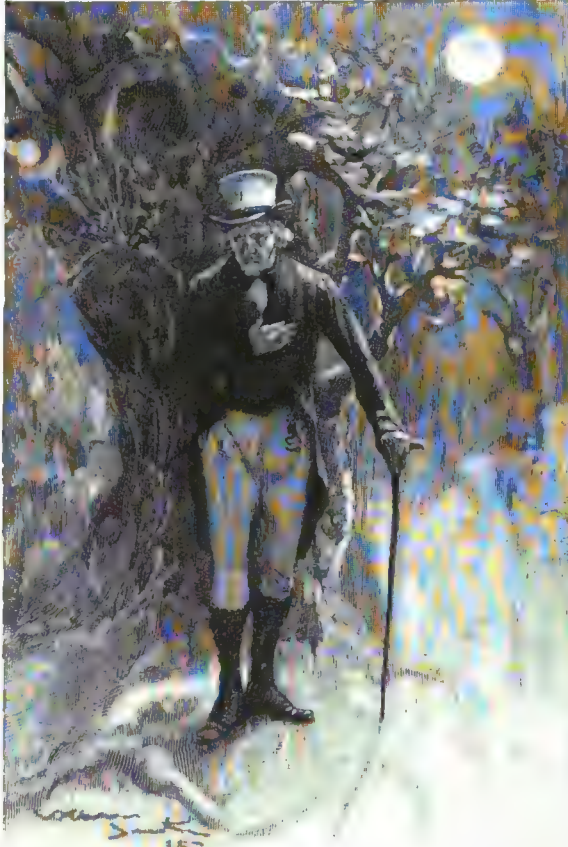
*"The link between."*

A little startled, Dorrington looked hastily round. Had the words been spoken, or had he only fancied he heard them? A strange, uncanny feeling was beginning to steal

over him. To hear the sound of his own voice, he presently said: "This place is in Chancery, I hear; and the large funded property without an owner."

"A wrong done."

"Indeed!" ejaculated Dorrington, impressed without being able to understand precisely why; wondering what kind of man this might be to talk in such mysterious fashion. They moved on in silence again, until it was broken by Dorrington, who suddenly exclaimed: "Why, we are close to the house. This cannot be the right way.



"STANDING BENEATH A TREE."

Did you understand that I want to go to the village?"

"You are wanted here."

"I? For what?"

"Follow."

"I do not understand," replied the young man, telling himself that he must have got into the hands of a madman; but conscious the while of an undercurrent of feeling to which he shrank from giving a name. "I fancy that if I were to strike across the glade there, and down through the woods in that direction"—he thought, pausing and looking back—"Yes; surely those lights down there must be in the village."

"Follow me."

Again the words sounded as though they were breathed rather than spoken, although they were clear enough to his mental apprehension. Once more Niel looked round at the other, but somehow failed to obtain a more distinct impression than he had previously gained. "There can be nothing for me to do up there," he murmured, feeling at the same time that, for some unaccountable reason, go he must. Impelled, he knew not how or why, he walked on again, telling himself, with a grim little attempt at a jest, that it seemed he was not to be permitted to use his own will in the matter.

They were drawing very near to the house, and as they crossed what had been an Italian garden laid out in the old-fashioned way, with terraces, low balustrades, quaintly cut yew trees, which had almost lost their original shape, and stone statues and vases—some overturned and half-hidden in the long, rank grass—he noticed a great oriel window giving upon the terrace, the lower part of which was open.

His mysterious guide moved straight towards it, and with a gesture of his hand, seemed to invite the other to enter. Niel hesitated, looking doubtfully into the room; then, after a moment, obeyed the gently impelling pressure of a hand upon his arm and went in. A large library, lofty, finely proportioned, and its shelves apparently well filled, but with the indescribably forlorn appearance of having been long disused.

His senses were keenly on the alert, and his curiosity aroused by the other's air of mystery. "You say I am wanted here. In what way can I be of use?"

"A great wrong done."

"You said that before," thought Niel.

"It is for you to undo it."

"How?" striving once more to keep off the eerie feeling stealing upon him.

"Take it down," pointing to a large volume on one of the shelves.

To his own great surprise, Niel mechanically took down the volume, and placed it on the table.

"Page two hundred."

Niel looked round at him. "Does this place belong to you?"

"Once."

"Then why do you not look yourself?"

No reply.

"He is mad," thought Dorrington. "Yes, it must be that," still trying to keep off another and more gruesome suspicion which again suggested itself.

He felt his hand impelled towards the book.

"Page two hundred."

It opened at the page easily enough, and Niel saw a sealed packet.

"Take it."

His nerves at their utmost tension, Niel's fingers closed over the packet.

"What do you wish me to do with this?"

"Right—the—wrong," the words sounding more faintly now, but still clear enough to Niel's mental apprehension.

"You must tell me more than you have yet done first," turning to face the other.

*No one!*

The moonlight streaming in showed him that he stood alone. He strode the length of the room.

"Where are you?" he exclaimed. "What trick are you trying to play upon me? Do you think I will carry off this packet, to which I have no right, without knowing more?"

"Right the wrong."

For answer Niel threw the packet on to the table, went to the bell, and rang it vigorously for a few seconds. The sound, coming from some distance, faintly echoing along passages, reached his ears. He stood sternly waiting.

Dead silence! He rang again and again, with the same result. Then with a sudden access of what he was not afterwards ashamed to call panic he rushed out on to the terrace.

Was it the chill night air? As he emerged from the house a cold shiver passed over him; and then—the packet he had thrown on to the table, and certainly had not taken up again, was in his hand, and the word "Remember" came softly sighing to his ears.

Hardly knowing which way he took in his haste to get away, he sped down the avenue and through the woods. Was the figure he had seen that of one who belonged to another world? Dorrington had hitherto been as sceptical of the possibility of such communi-





"NIEL'S FINGERS CLOSED OVER THE PACKET."

cations as were the generality of the people of the world in which he lived. But now!

It was with a deep breath of relief that he found himself after a while—how long, he knew not, nor how he had contrived to get into the right way again—at the swing gate which gave upon the village.

On emerging into the road, he saw a few people about; and, on inquiring his way to the "Ram's Head," found that it was but a few steps across the green from where he stood.

How welcome were the everyday sights and sounds: gossiping women grouped in twos and threes at cottage doors in the twilight; laughing and squabbling children; cackling of geese; and the "hish, hish" of the hostler rubbing down a restless horse, clattering about on the stones of the inn yard.

Niel was shown into a cheerful, brightly-

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lighted travellers' room; and the inn-keeper presently came in to receive his orders in person.

"Whatever the house affords, landlord," he said, conscious of being himself human enough in the sudden need he felt for refreshment. "Just a cutlet and a potato, as soon as you can; and meanwhile bring in some of your best wine. Missed my way in the woods coming from the station, and feel a little run down. Have they sent my bag—Mr. Dorrington?"

"Yes, sir. They should not direct strangers to take the short cut through the woods. It is so easy to take the wrong turn and get lost there for hours. Got a fright in the woods, I fancy—looks as though he had seen the ghost," he thought, bustling out for the wine, and in again.

"Sit down and take some with me," said Dorrington.

The landlord sat down willingly enough. "Wants to hear what I know about it," he thought. "And he is welcome to that"; adding, aloud, "Rather a dreary walk through those woods at the best of times. After sunset, folks about here prefer taking the road way, though it's longer. They do say that the old squire as was walks there."

"He is dead?"

"Sixteen years, and more, sir."

"Why is he supposed to haunt the place?"

"Can't rest, it's thought. Something on his conscience when he died."

The words "Right the wrong!" repeated themselves in Dorrington's brain.

"The old squire—he was very nearly eighty when he died—had his ways. He was a good master to those who served him well, and without question; but hard, sir, hard.



Cared for little besides money, and what he called keeping up the old name. He was nearly fifty when he married; and people said he wouldn't then, but for the hope of having an heir to inherit his wealth, though his wife was a lady any man might have been proud of, for she was young and beautiful, and gently born. Well, the squire had his wish one way, for a son was born to them two years after the marriage. The boy proved to be of the right sort too, not likely to be spoilt by his father.

"Mrs. Lenster was a gentle, right-minded lady; and she made the most of the time while the boy was too young for companionship with his father, and was supposed to be running wild. The old squire didn't set much value upon learning, beyond what was sufficient to make his son sharp and fitted to take good care of the wealth that was to come to him.

"But the lad favoured his mother. When he was twelve years old, Mrs. Lenster died; and then his father took him in hand. But it was too late to undo the work she had done. The boy was clever, high-spirited, and generous; and could not be brought into his father's ways. In vain did the squire try to bend his son to his will. It only made the breach between them wider. He was jealous, too, of the boy's unswerving love for his mother; and, without knowing how to, set to work to win as much for himself. As time went on, all this became more and more evident. The young squire got on well at college, and was said to make plenty of friends there; but at home it was dull enough; no visitors were welcome at the Park, and the great house was nearly all shut up, for the squire grew more and more miserly, and kept but a very few servants.

"When the young man was five-and-twenty, there was a great quarrel between him and his father. The rights of it were never known, but it was supposed the son wanted to marry someone the father disapproved. The young man went away, and was dared to enter the doors again, the squire vowing he would leave all he possessed to strangers.

"This was all that was known; except that a year or two later came a letter to the squire, which seemed to put a seal to his anger. The servants were warned not to mention his son's name on penalty of instant dismissal; and he became more stern and unsociable than ever. Before another year had passed, came news of the young man's death. He was brought there to be buried, and the old man must

have felt more than he was supposed to feel, for he never spoke again, dying a few days afterwards from a stroke.

"It was thought that something had occurred when he went to bring home his dead son, and that his mind was burdened by the recollection of some wrong done, for at the last he was very anxious to speak to those about him. He strove hard to make himself understood; but in vain. He died with the secret, whatever it was, unrevealed. Moreover, no will was found; it was supposed he had destroyed it, for he was seen tearing up and burning papers on his return from the funeral. Do you happen to know any of the family, sir? A good old stock, the Lensters."

"No; I never to my knowledge heard the name until yesterday."

Finding that if the young man had anything to tell, he was not in the mood to tell it, the landlord presently left him to his reflections.

Dorrington took the packet that had so mysteriously come into his possession from his pocket. Yes, it was real enough, he thought, turning it over in his hands and examining it with curious eyes: a large envelope fastened with a black seal—the impression upon which he supposed to be the Lenster crest—and containing apparently more than one letter.

No address or superscription of any kind! Niel sat gazing down at it, wondering what mystery it contained; but, curious as he was, not choosing to break the seal.

What to do? What if he were to take the packet to Sherrard, and ask his advice? "That's what I will do," he presently decided, putting it into his pocket as dinner was announced.

After attempting a cigar, which did not quite come up to his expectations in comparison with the rest of the entertainment, he gave directions to be called in time to catch the morning express at the junction, went to his room, and this time slept through the night without any disturbing dream.

On arriving at the London terminus the next day, and driving to his chambers, he found the letter he had hardly hoped to see already awaiting him. He tore open the envelope, took out the letter, and hurriedly ran his eyes through the contents.

"Dear Mr. Dorrington,—I am able to write sooner than I expected, because I left Mrs. Bellamy to-day. We both agreed it was better I should go, and I hope you will not blame either of us. I will not say here



"A LARGE ENVELOPE FASTENED WITH A BLACK SEAL."

what I think of the honour you have done me. I cannot be your wife—as I told you, it cannot be. Nor must you think I am in any way influenced by your aunt. The obstacle not to be overcome is that my mother—my dear mother—was not married, and I take her name. I cannot be your wife. Dear Mr. Dorrington, I want you to quite understand that nothing can alter this decision. Therefore, I think it is best that you should hear no more about me, nor know where I am. You must not think that life will be hard for me. Remember always that I have chosen the way I am taking of my own free will. Take this as my final good-bye, and believe me ever your true friend, DAPHNE WARD."

"Accept her final good-bye!" he laughed out at the bare idea. "Does she think she will escape me so easily? I will find her, conceal herself where she may. Her mother not married—that an obstacle! Ah, Daphne, you ought to know me better. As though you could be any better to me if she had been married. I must not lose a moment, but—Ah, Sherrard, of course!" Dorrington remembered now having heard that

it was the family lawyer who had recommended Daphne to his aunt.

In ten minutes he was driving full speed in the direction of Lincoln's Inn.

When he was ushered into Mr. Sherrard's private room, that gentleman looked up with some surprise. "Already!" he thought; "I did not expect him so soon as this—I must be on my guard."

"Where is Miss Ward, Mr. Sherrard?" began Niel, plunging at once into the subject, and adding, as the other was about to protest: "Of course, you know where she is. It was you who recommended her to my aunt."

"I know she has left Mrs. Bellamy, and I am bound to tell you that I quite approve of her having done so, Mr. Dorrington."

"Why?" Not liking to repeat what she had told him, in case the other had not already heard it.

"Well, to be plain with you, her mother was not married, and she will not be the means of destroying your future prospects."

"Prospects! What would they be without her? How little you know me. Look here, Mr. Sherrard;

I mean to marry Daphne Ward. Nothing shall prevent it."

"If you have not considered consequences, she has."

"I have well considered them. It won't be much of a match for her, to be sure. I shall most probably have nothing more than the small property which came to me from my mother to depend upon in the outset. But I am hoping to make my way after awhile. I am thinking of realizing the ten thousand and investing in some safe firm, where I could act as working partner. Yes," noting the smile on the other's lips, "I mean work, and I think my University training ought to be of some use."

"I believe you are in earnest, Mr. Dorrington, and I honour you for it; but I know what you would be giving up in acting against Mrs. Bellamy's wishes, and—a moment, my dear sir—I also know Miss Ward; and I am very sure she will not consent."

"Leave that to me. Where is she?"

"That I must not reveal without her permission. But I may say that she has found a home with friends who, I can promise you, will take good care of her. But for the

pride—to her I call it that, to you I will say independence—she would not have gone out into the world as she has.”

“I must find her for myself—tell her that she ought to remember that my happiness is concerned as well as her pride.”

Mr. Sherrard looked approvingly at the young man. Keen lawyer as he was, he was something besides, as an invalid wife could have told. He fidgeted in his chair, turned over the papers before him, and looked at his watch.

Dorrington noticed the movement, and thinking that he had some appointment perhaps, and was desirous of putting an end to the interview, rose to his feet. “So that you understand what my determination is, it is sufficient for the present, Mr. Sherrard.”

“I never had to do with two young people so determined, if that will satisfy you, my dear sir. Is there nothing else you wish to consult me about?”

“Yes; why, yes, of course there is; I had nearly forgotten that!” ejaculated Niel. “If you can give me a few minutes longer, I should like to ask your advice about a packet which mysteriously came into my possession.” As shortly as might be, he told the story of the previous night’s experience, noticing that the other listened intently, and without the smile he had expected to see when he touched upon the mysterious appearance. As he finished the narration he took the packet from his pocket and placed it on the table before the lawyer.

“What do you make of it? What do you think I ought to do?”

Mr. Sherrard appeared not to hear him. “Lenster’s-End!” he murmured. “Odd—very odd,” passing his hand over his chin, his eyes fixed meditatively upon the young man.

“Do you know the place?”

“Well, Mr. Lenster was a client of ours.” Taking up the packet and looking at the seal, he added: “The family crest. Yes, I think you would be justified in breaking the seal. Should the contents prove to be of any importance, it will be only to pass them on to the trustees—as they have told you, the property is in Chancery.”

“Yes, the landlord of the inn told me that.”

“Open it; I take the responsibility of advising you to do so.”

Niel broke the seal, and took from the envelope a letter and two folded papers.

“Read the letter, Dorrington; read it.”

“I will read it aloud.”

“Yes, yes; go on.”

Wondering not a little at the other’s sudden excitement and apparent impatience to hear the contents—different feelings seemed to be jostling each other in his mind—Niel began.

“My dear father, I am making a last appeal to you; and this time not on my own behalf. I found employment, and have contrived to keep my dear wife so far. But the work has been, they say, too hard for me. The doctor tells me that it is owing to over-exertion that hemorrhage of the lungs, from which I am suffering, has set in. It has entirely incapacitated me for the time, and put an end to all hope of earning a living. My only chance is, he says, entire rest for a year. At best, it is but a bare chance for me; and, in case of a relapse, I am sending the certificates of our marriage and the birth of our child—you will see that we have given her my mother’s name—in the hope that you will provide for them. My poor wife is not strong, and the shock of my illness has told upon her greatly. She bids me tell you that, if I am taken from her, there is little chance that she will trouble anyone long. Dear father, try to forgive me for having married against your consent. But for its being against your wish, I have never had the slightest reason to regret my marriage. As you know, my wife is of gentle birth, and lacked nothing but money. I ask you, perhaps from the grave, to remember that Mary has been a loving, faithful wife to me in the struggle I have gone through. Remember, too, that our child is the last of our line, and——”

Mr. Sherrard did not wait to hear more. Catching up the papers, he glanced through them and broke into a glad laugh.

“My dear sir, my dear sir, do you know what you have brought me?” he ejaculated, looking as much unlike the methodical business lawyer his clients knew as it was possible to look.

“What?” asked Dorrington, in some astonishment, as the other seized both his hands and shook them warmly. “Do you mean the young man’s letter to his father?”

“The young man, indeed—do you know of whom you are speaking?”

“The old man’s son, I suppose; and these are the proofs of his marriage which were missing. Well, I am glad, of course, to be instrumental in their recovery; but I do not see what difference it can make to me personally.”

“It makes the difference that he was Daphne’s father.”

"Her father? Daphne's! Is it possible?" even more excited than the other.

"Read for yourself."

Dorrington took the papers from the other's hand. "Yes; Edward Lenster and Mary Ward-Daphne Lenster, born—why, this means——"

"It means that what we have searched for all these long years is found. It means not only that Miss Daphne is legitimate, but that she is heiress to all her grandfather's wealth. Young Mr Lenster died at the hospital to which he was taken; and his father told me that the wife, as we must now call her, died within a few hours of his son. But he would not tell me where. He placed Daphne, who was then two years old, in my care, stating that she was his son's child, and that she bore only her mother's name—God forgive him. He paid me a sum sufficient to provide for her board and education until she was eighteen—old enough to get her own living. He died just afterwards, almost suddenly, I believe. My wife and I—no matter about that—when Daphne was eighteen, we thought it right she should know what there was to know: and then she insisted upon going out into the world and earning her own bread."

"But where is she?"

"Come down to Harrow with me and you shall hear the rest. My dear Dorrington, there is no time to spare. Never been late for dinner in my life."

"Only tell me——"

"If you wish to find Daphne ——"

This was enough. Mr. Sherrard locked up the important documents and they set forth. He occupied himself with his note-book as they drove to the station and on the way down by train—Niel fancied to avoid further

questioning, and strove to wait patiently as might be. The short distance to the lawyer's house was very quickly walked.

"Come in here, Dorrington," said Mr. Sherrard, ushering the young man into a study and leaving him to himself.

In two minutes the door opened again.

"Mrs. Sherrard says you want me," began Daphne, as she took a step into the room. "Oh!" she ejaculated, shrinking back at sight of him.

He was at her side in a moment. "So I do, as I never could want anyone or anything else on earth."

"But—but—Ah! no!" striving to withdraw herself. "How could Mr. Sherrard break faith with me?"

"There has been no breaking faith, my darling—a wonderful discovery has been made. Think of what you would most care to hear."

"My mother?"—in a low voice, a hot flush covering her face.

"She was the beloved wife of Edward Lenster."

"Is it true? Are you sure?" almost afraid to believe, her eyes eagerly searching his.

"His wife?"

"Absolutely. We hold the proofs. Only"—seeing that the happiness the revelation brought was almost more than she could bear, and trying the effect of a little jest—"you called yourself proud, you know, and you are now heiress to great wealth. What am I to do if you reject me again?"

"Proud! Ah, Niel, I shall never be proud but of one thing now—I know the true value of your love."



"A WONDERFUL DISCOVERY HAS BEEN MADE."

## The Queer Side of Things.

### THE DISADVANTAGES OF MIND.



**L** was the heyday of the pleistocene period. Mrs. Elephas Primigenius sat up and yawned. Then she washed the children in a pond, and untied the rushes with which she curled the hairs at the ends of their tails every night, and brushed down the little ones with a bunch of thorns. Then she went and kicked Mr. Primigenius as hard as she could.

"What a healthy sleeper George is, to be sure!" she said.

Snatching up one of the children with her trunk, she hurled it in the air, so that it descended with a resounding bump on its father's head: but Mr. P. only grunted and turned over in his sleep.

So Mrs. P. jumped as high as she could, and came down bang on her spouse. Yet the result was only a larger grunt.

"Gee-orge!" she screamed; "get up, will you? It's past breakfast time. Gee-orge!"

No use. Then she found a boulder weighing a ton or two, carried it to the top of the rock above Mr. P.'s head, and dropped it over. It descended on Mr. P.'s

head with a shock that shook the surrounding cliffs: and Mr. P. opened his eyes, said "Eh, my dear?" and slowly sat up and yawned.

"What a dreadful nuisance you are to wake!" said Mrs. P., crossly. "With thousands of ants boring into your hide, and you asleep like an idiot right in that puddle—enough to lay you up with rheumatic fever, and there I shall be, a lone widow with these seven children to support, and it's a pity you can't be a little more considerate!"

Mr. P. sat chuckling in a way that frightened the ichthyosaurus, who lived next door, nearly into a fit.

"Ho! ho! Roo-matic fever!" roared Mr. P. "Roo-matic fever! I hain't delicate, my dear—don't you bother yourself about *me*. I'm a 'ealthy sleeper, Jane; that's what *I* am."

"You're a horrid rough lump; *that's* what you are!" said Mrs. P., thoroughly angry. "A rough, lumping, clumping, lumbering, pachydermatous mass of material, without any mind or sensibilities. It's a pity you don't cultivate some sensibilities by improving your mind a bit; *that's* what I think!"

And Mrs. P. stamped away to pull down a few trees for the children's breakfast.

Mr. Elephas Primigenius sat where he was.



"YOU'RE A HORRID ROUGH LUMP."



He appeared to be trying to think. He was moody, and not in his usual spirits.

"Horrid rough lump!" he murmured, and sat stroking his trunk with his paw. Presently he muttered: "'Pachydermatous mass,' eh? 'No sensibilities.' 'Improve my mind a bit.' Humph!" And when Mrs. P. returned he was still sitting there pondering.

"Whatever on earth *is* the matter, George?" said Mrs. P. "You're not in spirits this morning. Have you eaten anything that disagrees with you?"

"Disagrees with me!" said Mr. P., with deep derision. "Dis-a-grees with *me*!" Dj'yer ever know anything disagree with *me*? It'd have to be a toughish morsel, my dear!"

Yet he certainly was *not* in his wonted spirits. Instead of partaking of his usual breakfast of half an acre of forest and a few tons of grass, he strayed moodily by the river all the rest of the day, deeply pre-occupied about something; and towards evening he hastily masticated a few trees, and then sat gloomily with his back against a rock until the small hours of the morning; after which he fell into a troubled slumber, punctuated by grunts.

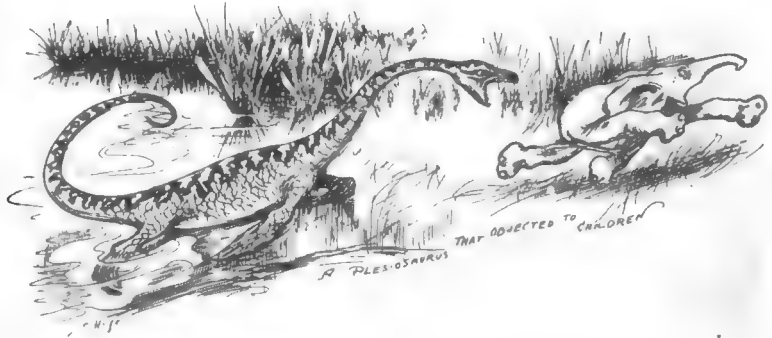
When he woke next morning he went straight off by the river; and Mrs. P. saw no more of him until, going in search of him, she found him minutely inspecting a small plant—sitting and watching it intently.

"Whatever on earth *are* you doing, George?" said Mrs. P., impatiently. "What's the matter with that little plant, that you're sitting glowering at it like that?"

"Tryin' to improve my mind, Jane," replied Mr. P. "It struck me you were about right in what you said yesterday morning; so I'm looking into things a bit to see 'ow they're done. I've been watching this plant grow—most interesting, my dear, although, o' course, it's rather slow work. But I feel it's doing me good, Jane; and that's a fact. There's a lot of wonderful things a-going on which never struck me before. What makes that plant grow? How does it do it? *Why* does it do it? Dear me! Most absorbin'."

"Poor George," said Mrs. P. to herself, "I really didn't mean it. I'm sure I wouldn't hurt his feelings for the world; but perhaps it'll be good for him; he'll be all the better for something to occupy his mind all day while I'm looking after the children. I'm afraid I don't look after him so much since little James, and Maria, and Henrietta came," and she sighed, and went back to busy herself about a new bandage of grass for little James's foot, which had been bitten by a plesiosaurus that objected to children.

Mr. Primigenius seemed very much changed; every day he would bring home a lot of plants which he was studying, and litter the domestic turf with them. One day he



suddenly got up, selected two flints, laid one of them on a granite boulder, took the other with the end of his trunk, and sat patiently tapping it on the first. The little P.'s, who thought it must be some new game, gathered round and watched.

"What are you making, George?" asked Mrs. P.

"A knife, my dear—a dissecting-knife, to cut up the specimens with," said Mr. P., and he chipped patiently until he had made a keen edge, while Mrs. P. meditated wonderingly on this change from his old impatient way of tearing and rending anything which offered any resistance to his efforts.

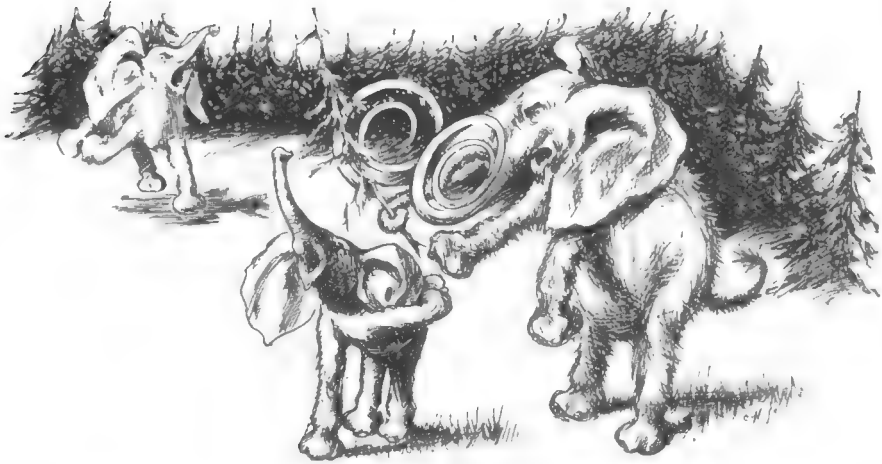
It was a few days after this that Mrs. P. heard dismal wails proceeding from one of the children, and, with a mother's anxiety, ran hastily up, to find Mr. P. birching little James with a young pine-tree.

"Oh, George! What has he done?"

"Bin eatin' them plants!" roared Mr. P.

"Plants!" said Mrs. P., indignantly. "Of course. Don't you expect your lawful, innocent offspring to eat plants like their father did before 'em, you unnatural parent? Perhaps you look for 'em to go eating mud like the slimyosaurus and such-like low





HIRCHING LITTLE JAMES.

characters? They'd better let me catch 'em at it—that's all!"

"But, my love," said poor Mr. P., "they're my specimens he's bin eating, and all after me a-layin' them out so careful on the shelf! Tell you what: if I'm to improve my mind, I shall have to have a study to myself; and that's all about it!"

So Mrs. Primigenius went and stroked her husband gently with her paw, and led away little James, still howling; and then she helped her husband to build a wall of boulders round a space of green turf, at the foot of a rock conveniently formed in shelves for the specimens; and this was Mr. P.'s study; and the youngsters were warned not to set foot in it.

Time went on, and Mrs. P. began to get dissatisfied. She missed the society of her husband, once so cheering to her amid the cares of a family. She sat down by him on the study wall, and took his paw.

"Don't you think, George, dear, that—that you've improved your mind enough now?" she said, ruefully. "I never thought you would take what I said so seriously to heart; and I'm sure you're looked upon as quite a superior person now by the mastodon and hippopotamus-major, and megaceros hibernicus, and anoplotherium, and all those. They're always talking about your learnedness; and, what's more, I'm not sure they're quite pleased about it. They seem to feel hurt; they say prehistoric mammalia were intended to be prehistoric mammalia and behave themselves as such with proper palæozoicism, and not go making superior, conceited, stuck-up philosophers of themselves. I heard the

hippopotamus say as much to the whatdye-callit vulpiceps only yesterday."

Mr. P. shook his head. "I feel I ought to keep on," he said. "I think it's my mission. Every day I feel more and more how horribly ignorant I am."

"You're not looking so well as you used to," said Mrs. P., with a tear in her eye. "You're paler; and I believe you're thinner. You never trumpet now, like you used to when you were merry; and the children miss it; and I miss the walks we used to take together through the palæodendric glades. You never come and paddle in the lake now. I'm sorry I ever said that about improving your mind!" And she wept.

"I am convinced that study is the right thing—the proper pursuit even for a prehistoric mammal," said Mr. P., thoughtfully; and she could not but notice the remarkable improvement in his method of speech.

It was useless to attempt to stop the ball which she herself had set rolling; and bitter regret alone was left to her.

One evening, some years after this, he arose from his studies, and sank wearily down on a knoll outside.

"You're tired, George, dear!" said Mrs. P., passing her paw over his brow. "And I never saw you so pale!"

"Tired? Pale?" began Mr. P., in a voice of derision; but he paused; and when he went on it was in quite a different tone:—

"I do believe I *am* tired, Jane! Just fancy *my* getting tired. To tell the truth, I have a bit of a headache, and a sort of a pain in my chest."

"Ah, I thought so—indigestion!" said Mrs. P.

Mr. P. looked toward the children, who were trying to pull down a large bulkeyodendron thousandfeetium Jonesii to play with; and they came trooping to their father to beg him to pull it down for them; and Mr. P. rose wearily and plodded towards it.

Seven times he tried to pull down that tree, but without success.

"I'm—I'm afraid I'm not quite the elephant I used to be, Jane!" he said, sadly. "A few years ago I should have thought nothing of pulling down a tree bigger than that—and now——"

"Oh, you're out of sorts, George; that's all. Why, you're quite young yet, as I told that horrid, rowdy hippopotamus the other day when he had the impertinence to suggest that he could pull harder than you—quite young, and worth twenty of him!"

But in spite of the forced gaiety of Mrs. P.'s tone, a little sigh betrayed her inward anxiety; and she gazed furtively and sadly at her husband as he went slowly and wearily back to his seat on the knoll.

At that moment the hippopotamus strolled up.

"Hullo, Primey!" he shouted.

"Why, you're looking off colour! Lost flesh too, old chappie—lost flesh. Why, I'll wager you don't weigh as much as me now!"

"Impertinence! He weighs as much as ten of you, so there!" said Mrs. P.,

angrily: but the moment after she regretted that she had said it; for the hippopotamus told the young elephants to balance a convenient log on a boulder, and invited Mr. P. to sit on one end while he sat on the other; and it was with intense mortification and misgiving that Mrs. P. saw the hippopotamus's end go down.

"I do wish those pterodactyls wouldn't keep up such a shrieking!" said Mr. P. It was in the early hours of the morning; and he had lain, vainly trying to sleep ever since he had retired the evening before.

"What with one row and another in this miserable prehistoric forest, I'll be hanged if I can get any sleep! As soon as the *bos antiquus* leaves off bellowing, the confounded *bubalus moschatus* begins; then the palæontological carnivora of Cuvier take it up; then the beastly *machairodus palmidens* begins his yelling; and the batrachians begin whistling all out of tune; and—hang it all, I can't get a wink!"

"You didn't mind noises once!" said poor Mrs. P. "You could sleep through anything. Noises are unavoidable in the palæozoic era."

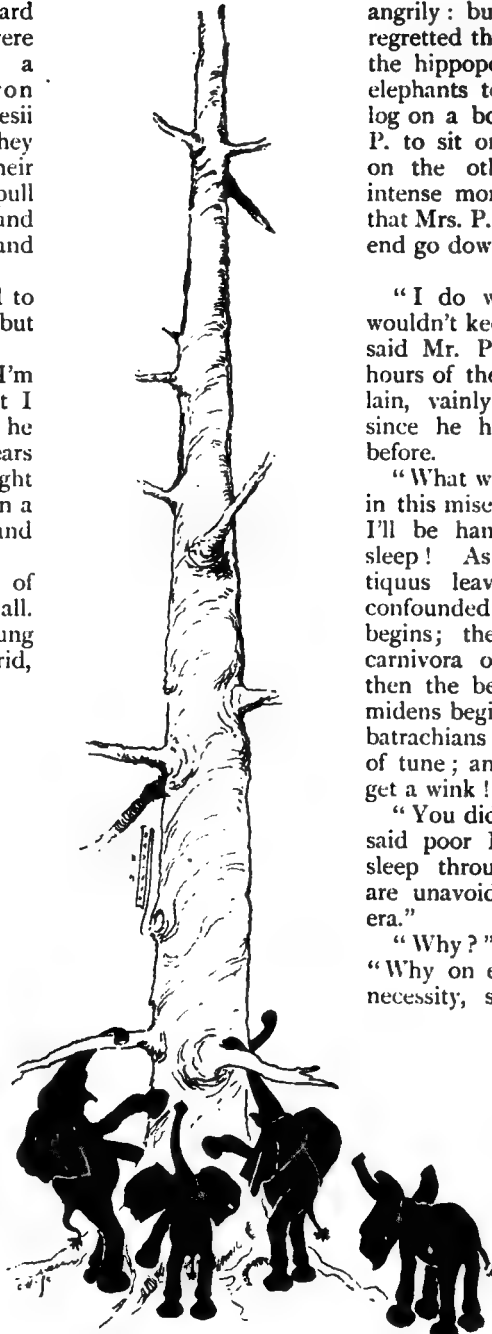
"Why?" said Mr. P., irritably. "Why on earth? Noise is not a necessity, surely? I *hate* noise."

Why can't these fools of animals have a little consideration for their neighbours?"

"Well, dear; you know their other neighbours don't mind noise, and can sleep through it. Your nerves are really getting dreadfully acute. I wish

you had never, never taken up this miserable improving of your mind. You'll be a confirmed invalid—mark my words, George."

He was growing daily more irritable, especially during his fits of indigestion, which



A BULKEYODENDRON THOUSANDFEETIUM JONESII.



PTERODACTYLS.

were becoming more and more frequent: his appetite had fallen off dreadfully, and he had to be very careful about what he ate, being no longer able to digest anything but the tenderest shoots of a few plants. After a time he began to find that his sight was not so good as it had been; and he had to look about for some rock-crystal, and slowly and painfully grind down two pieces into convex form, and fix them on each side of his trunk in front of his eyes.

He slept worse and worse, until he found himself the victim of confirmed insomnia.

Poor Mrs. P. would hide herself behind a mountain and sob for hours after she had seen the other prehistoric fauna whispering in corners and pointing at her husband: she knew the malicious delight those uncultivated specimens found in the misfortunes of a fellow-creature.

Mr. P. was becoming alarmingly emaciated and bald, and his nerves were dreadful; he suffered acutely from neuralgia and jumps. He knew a great deal by this time, having, in addition to his earnest study of botany, devoted much time to mineralogy and zoology; the latter being a very favourite pursuit, as it gave him much pleasure in his present unamiable and irritable state of mind to catch the smaller vertebrata and subject them to vivisection with that flint-knife he had made.

Every day the ravages made by brain upon body became more noticeable: Elephas Primigenius was a physical wreck. The acutest form of melancholia set in, resulting from complete nervous exhaustion.

Mrs. P. sat with the little P.'s in the study—they were all sobbing as if their hearts would break. The hippopotamus-major looked in.

"Hullo!" he said, awkwardly. "I say, I *do* hope there's nothing serious, Mrs. P.? I'm a rough, thoughtless fellow, I know; but if there's any blessed thing I can do for you——"

"He's gone!" sobbed poor Mrs. P. "Wandered away! I've searched for him everywhere! Oh, I'm afraid—afraid that—oh, what *shall* I do?"

"Deary, deary!" blurted out the hippopotamus, hurriedly brushing his eyes with his paw. "It's all right, ma'am—do believe me, it's all right. I'm a rough fellow, I know—but——"

He hurried away, and searched tirelessly high and low; and at length he came upon the emaciated form of Mr. P. standing



gloomily in a shallow pond. In an instant the hippopotamus had dragged him out and was standing over him on the grass.

"P.!" he roared, stamping all his feet with indignation, "what were you doing?"

"Going to put an end to it—drown myself," said Mr. P., sullenly.

"P.!" said the hippopotamus, "you're a coward—a coward and a criminal! Be an

this moment. You have changed me! You are right—I'll do it, every letter of it! You are right—a palæozoic specimen should be a palæozoic specimen and act as such, instead of inventing nerves. Don't speak, old chap!"

Elephas Primigenius was never the same fellow he had once been; but he picked up



STANDING GLOOMILY IN A SHALLOW POND

elephant, P.! Only to think of it, and her at home, poor soul, crying her eyes out! Just look here, P.—I've known her and you for many years, and I tell you I *won't* stand by and see any more of this tomfoolery. Now you just mind what I say—you go away home right now, and you smash up every blessed one of them blessed specimens o' yours, sharp—d'ye hear? And if I ever see you studying any blessed thing again, I'll give you such a lathering that—confound my eyes, if I don't break every bone in your body! Now hustle!"

Elephas Primigenius looked at him, and saw the strange, fixed determination in his eye, and the scorn and indignation in it; and rose, and gripped his rough paw.

"Hippy!" he said, in a new voice, "I never knew what a good fellow you were till

somewhat under careful treatment, and could get about.

He forbade his children to take to any form of study.

Hippopotamus-major called a meeting of the palæozoics, at which it was unanimously carried that "This meeting unreservedly condemns all cultivation of the mind, as tending to injure and undermine the physical health and well-being, and to introduce a most undesirable and disastrous innovation known as nerves: and it considers it the highest duty of the creatures of the palæozoic era to discourage and oppose all undertakings in the direction indicated, and to leave all such foolishness to races of inferior intelligence and wisdom."

So there were no more nerves nor debility until a creature called "man" arrived on the earth.

J. F. SULLIVAN.

## Abraham Fleeter's Weariness.



ABRAHAM FLEETER was pacing up and down the room with an air of weariness and disgust; now and then he would turn aside and take down a piece of old armour from the wall, a piece of old earthenware from a shelf, a Byzantine casket from the overmantel; then return it to its place with an impatient grunt.

Mrs. Fleeter, writing letters at a table, watched him from the tail of her eye, and sighed to herself.

Mr. Fleeter threw himself into a chair in front of the clean foolscap paper and pen and inkstand laid out in readiness: he took up the pen, and threw it down again in disgust.

"Can't you get on with your story, Abraham?" said Mrs. Fleeter. "You know the editor's waiting for it."

"He can wait!" said Mr. Fleeter. "I'm sick of writing stories—sick and tired; it's one horrible monotony of writing stories!"

"Then why not do a drawing? They have been waiting over a week now for the illustrations to that story they sent you."

"They can wait another week," said Abraham. "I'm sick of drawing; it's one horrible monotony of drawing!"

"Then take a rest," said Mrs. Fleeter, "and play with your armour and things."

"I'm sick of armour!" said Abraham. "There I see the same confounded pieces on the wall day after day, and week after week: it's so monotonous!"

"Why, you buy a new piece once a week, at least."

"Just so: and that's got dreadfully monotonous, too. I want a change."

"Sell your old stuff, then," said Mrs. Fleeter, "and buy——"

"*Sell my old stuff?*" shouted Abraham. "What—all those things I'm so fond of—and—and—so confoundedly sick of?"

He walked to the window and stared out; his head gloomily lowered, and the corners of his mouth down.

"What a beastly garden!" he growled.

"It's your own taste—you planted it yourself," said his wife.

"Yes—but what the goodness do the same blessed trees want to stick in the same blessed place for, morning after morning? There's that horrible mountain ash, for example; there it stands every day when I look out after breakfast, always in exactly the same spot; and, what's more, every spring it bears the same dirty-white flowers; and

every summer they turn to the same unoriginal red berries; and there they stick—until the same blackbird comes and pulls 'em all off. He *does* do that for me; he feels just like *I* do about 'em; *he* can't see what the deuce they want to come there year after year for, as if the idiots hadn't a new idea among 'em! There was a little relief this year—it certainly did freeze hard a morning or two at the end of May—but I don't like the weather, either."

"Oh, Abraham!" said Mrs. Fleeter, with a tear in her eye; "don't be so

discontented! It's really coming to such a pitch——"

"Keziah!" said Mr. Fleeter, very slowly and gravely. "It *is*. I can't stand it



"I'M SICK OF ARMOUR."

any longer, and I *won't*. I *will* have a change——”

“Ah, you had better change yourself!” said Keziah.

“I *will*!” said Abraham, in a low, determined voice; “I *will*. I will not be I any longer—it’s too monotonous. I will not be a draughtsman—nor a writer—nor——Why the deuce——?”

“Don’t swear, Abraham!” pleaded Keziah: but it was too late. There was a low triple tap at the door, and John, the servant, entered as usual to clear away the breakfast-things. John was tall and gaunt, with a thin, sallow face, a slight, black moustache ending in two turned-up points, a tiny beard also ending in two points, and black eyebrows which sloped upwards from the top of his nose at a steep angle, and finished off in tufts at the highest point. Mrs. Fleeter left the breakfast-room to attend to her house, and John softly closed the door.

Mr. Fleeter was standing looking out of window, with his back to the room. He seemed to grow uncomfortable, and brought his hand round several times to the back of his head as though a fly were teasing him. He changed from foot to foot, and began to shiver slightly; then slowly turned round as if involuntarily, and looked at John. John was standing with his eyes fixed on his master; and his master gasped and his jaw fell.

“Life *is* monotonous, sir, isn’t it? Very monotonous! There’s some mistake about it all. What’s required is change—change—change! There’s some excitement about change! Who wants to know what he’ll see and do when he gets up in the morning? Who wants to have the same dull, hackneyed round of commonplace experiences to go through day after day and year after year? It’s slow torture—not life at all!”

What Mr. Fleeter ought to have said, and expected to say, was, “John, I’ll trouble you

to leave off talking this sort of nonsense and go on with your duties.”

But that’s what he did not say. He stood with parted lips, glaring at John, and muttered, “Yes—yes! That’s it, exactly! That’s what I feel—that’s——Hang it, if I could only be something else, suddenly, to-morrow morning!”

“What would you prefer to be, on waking to-morrow morning?” asked John, the servant, bringing out a small, black pocket-book in a strangely business-like manner, and waiting with the pencil on one of the leaves.

Abraham Fleeter gasped a little gasp, and, glaring in a bewildered way at John, rubbed his forehead.

“Better make it as complete a change as possible,” said John. “You are an intellectual, talented man; you make your living by constant mental effort; your mind has kept your body thin; you are a nervous, sensitive man—fastidious and refined in your tastes. Now, suppose you were to wake up a sporting publican?”

Abraham conquered a passing sense of disgust, then said, “Yes, that *would* be a change; that would do capitally.”

“Very good, sir; thank you, sir,” said John, softly, and went on clearing away.

All that day Abraham was in a wild whirl of confused thoughts. Uncomfortable misgivings verging upon fear; a vague and disturbing sense of having taken a regrettable step, and an occasional impulse to try to undo it, occupied his morning. After lunch his sensations were less unpleasant, and he gave way to a potent impulse to jeer at his garden, and his armour, and his pottery—and tell them vauntingly that they would see no more of him after that day.

“Yah!” he said to the Elizabethan suit in the corner; “you’ll miss me to-morrow morning, but I sha’n’t miss *you*. My tastes will have changed: I sha’n’t care twopence for



“JOHN.”



such as you, and I sha'n't miss you—do you hear, you monotonous idiot? And you," he continued, looking out of window at the mountain ash with the dirty-white flowers, "you won't be able to annoy me with your confounded sameness; so put *that* in your pipe and smoke it!"

That evening Keziah concluded that he must have gone mad; he chuckled by the half-hour together, and kept winking at her in a way that suggested the knowledge of a "good thing," too enjoyable to be expressed in words. She shook her head, and sighed, and murmured: "Poor Abraham! I must ask Dr. Pillington about him!"

And that night Abraham sank to sleep chuckling insanely: then, before five minutes had elapsed, started from his sleep in terror, and sat upright in bed, muttering about undoing some step or other, and then chuckled again, and nodded at the principal articles of furniture in the room, and said, "Ta-ta! By-by! Take care of yourselves!" and once more sank to sleep.

Mrs. Fleeter could not sleep for hours, but lay weeping, for she was sure Abraham had gone mad.

Abraham awoke early. He did not feel seedy. This surprised him very much; for, after the manner of the modern town-worker, he had always felt most seedy and limp on waking in the morning.

Then he remembered, and proceeded to rise. To rise required some exertion, and this came to him as a customary occurrence; but on going into things a little more he discovered that corporeal weight, and not want of muscular energy, had caused the difficulty in rising: he was of considerable bulk—a man of some fifteen stone, portly, and rosy, and the picture of health and content.

For five minutes he stood surveying his reflection in the glass of the wardrobe, and nodding approvingly at himself; then he turned toward the bed where Keziah still lay fast asleep and snoring; and instead of a little, thin, anxious-looking woman, he saw a large, plump, rosy matron with a little, turned-up nose.

"Kezzie!" he roared, in a great, round, fat voice. "Time to get up! Derby Day; and the cab'll be round at nine, sharp. Look alive, Kezzie!" He had never called his wife "Kezzie" before—always "Keziah"; but she was not surprised.

When they got down to the breakfast-table in the bar-parlour, they stood face to face with a breakfast which the day before

would have made them feel faint with its vulgar abundance and substantiality: there were cold roast beef, and hot sausages, and bacon, and a large jug of stout-and-bitter, and some cold boiled pork, and half-a-dozen boiled eggs, in addition to the ordinary tea and coffee and toast: but Mr. and Mrs. Fleeter promptly sat down to it, and tucked their table-napkins under their double chins, and set to work heartily. With the change new habits had come upon Keziah: they were repulsive to her, for her mind had not altered; but they were part of her new physical personality.

"John!" shouted Abraham, with his mouth full of cold beef and beer.

John, the head barman, entered and stood with his arms a-kimbo: he was a tall, gaunt man, with a thin, sallow face, a slight black moustache ending in two turned-up points, a small double-pointed beard, and tufted eyebrows ascending at an angle.

"Just keep your eye open while I'm out, John," said Abraham, "and don't serve old Peters if he's the least bit fluffy. Inspector Jones's got his eye on the house; I've seen him hanging about at the corner. And look out for that smashing gang and their half-crowns—they were round at the 'Pineapple' yesterday. And if Rasper and Vittrell's traveller looks in again about that whisky he wants to shove on to us, tell him where to find the door sharp. And just keep your eye on George."

"Right y'are, guv'nor," replied John. "'Ope you'll 'ave a good time."

"Thankee, John," said Abraham, with a sudden uncomfortableness in his voice, and an eye which turned nervously toward the head barman, and a passing shiver.

All that day Abraham was boisterously contented, shouting with laughter, hobnobbing with the hansom-cabman who drove them down to Epsom, opening bottles of champagne and offering drinks to everybody about, always trying eagerly to get something on "Honeydew," or "Stewpan," or "Penny Whistle," chaffing the bookmakers, throwing at cocoanuts; and finally returning home, with dolls in his hat-band, in a state of mingled drowsiness and elation.

Keziah had taken her part, too; but underneath her joviality, and showing through it, there was a strange constraint.

"*This* is what I *call* a change, Kezzie!" he said, as they sat before an enormous supper after their return home. "This has broken the blessed old monotony, and don't you make any mistake!"

ornamental bottles and the advertisements stuck on the mirrors. The customers became alarmed and cleared out rapidly; while John, the head barman, leaned placidly against the counter and looked on with an unpleasant smile of satisfaction. The noise of the shots and the breaking glass made Keziah's head ache, and nearly terrified her into a fit.

"Just as well to practise a bit beforehand," said Abraham, in explanation.

"Say, Kez, thiser kinder fits me right down!" said Abraham. "No durned monotonous hyar, old woman!"

Keziah sat up in the cart and rubbed her eyes: she pushed aside the dirty rag which formed the tilt, and looked out. Abraham was engaged in helping John to kick a skeleton horse into his place between the shafts. Abraham was a big-boned giant in a tattered grey shirt, slouch hat, and greasy brown half-top boots—on his hips hung a pistol in a case.

John's dress was pretty similar; but, while John retained his original physical characteristics, Abraham's aspect was wholly changed. But she knew him well enough.

She was clothed in a dirty grey ragged gown, and an old straw hat lay at her side. At her side also, on the floor of the cart, was a small piece of broken hand-mirror.

She looked at herself: her face was grubby and bony; her tangled hair was hanging all over her shoulders. Her hands were coarse and large, with black edges to the bitten nails. She sank down in the cart and choked with sobs. Then she heard Abraham whistling merrily as he tied knots in the old rope-harness, and she peeped out at him, and sighed and murmured: "So long as it keeps him happy, poor dear!" and wiped her eyes; and then smiled and jumped gaily down and set about preparing breakfast. There were materials and utensils: a lump of rancid bacon, some coffee, a lump of bread, a lump of cheese, and an old meat-tin for a kettle.

Abraham was delighted, and whistled, chuckled, and swore incessantly; she learned from John that they had stolen the cart on the outskirts of a small township the day before; but all this seemed quite new to Abraham, who chuckled over it for a long time.

"We won't have to wait right hyar until they overhaul us, pard," said Abraham. "We'll just have to bustle along with thiser blamed ole thoroughbred and sell the whole

durned inheritance at Casey's Bluffs—whaat?"

"Thur ain't none o' the liar about you, jest fur this minute, Abe!" replied John.

So they sat over the wheels and hammered on the horse's bones with sticks until the blood dripped.

Keziah shuddered and shut her eyes; but Abraham was so elated and blasphemous that she felt a throb of joy, and thought: "It makes him happy, poor dear!"

There was a small cloud of dust behind, far away over the plain. Abraham and John saw it, and redoubled the hammering on the bones; suddenly the lean horse fell, and a wheel flew off the cart, and the three fell out. Abraham picked himself up and kicked the dying horse all over; he did not look to see whether Keziah was hurt; she rose with difficulty, and when she tried to raise her hand to a bruise on her head, the arm would not go up; and with the other hand she felt two spikes in the middle of her collar-bone, projecting under the skin.

"Oh, that'll jest git fixed up all right when we git to Casey's," said Abraham; "you don't need to go howling around like a coyote about that trifle; yer ken jest let yer arm kinder hang loose like a bell-rope, and smile, and the gentlefolks about won't notice nothing amiss."

He roared with laughter at his own humour.

The small cloud of dust now plainly contained a horseman, a few hundred yards away.

"Reckon I ken drop the varmint com-modious from hyar," said Abraham, taking up a kneeling position behind the capsized cart.

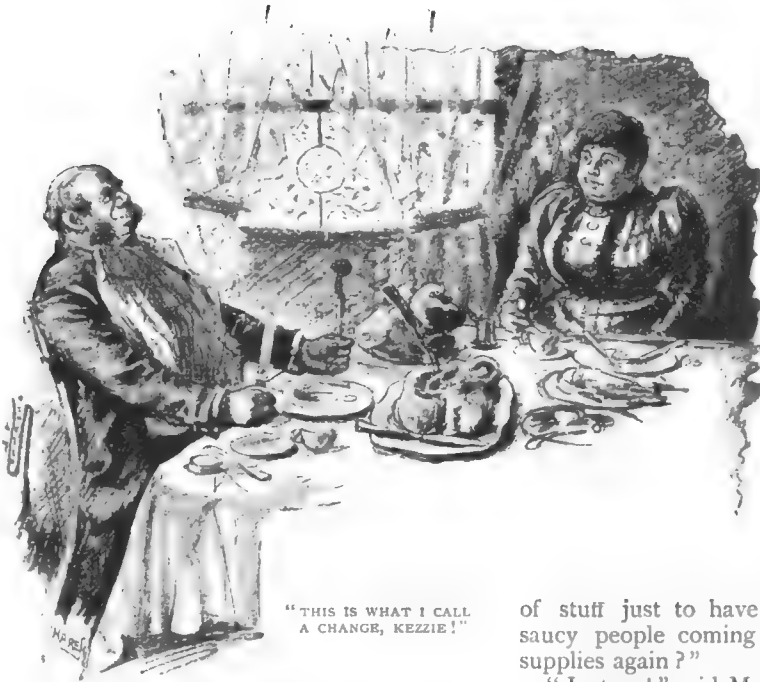
"Abraham! Abraham!" stammered Keziah. "You don't surely mean to murder——!" Then she stopped and murmured to herself: "But it keeps him happy, poor dear!" and crouched on the ground, and shut her eyes, and pressed her fingers on her ears.

There were three reports—two from Abraham's pistol and one from that of the pursuing owner of the horse and cart.

"Reckon the sucker ken lay right there," said Abraham. "But the nag'll be useful—whaat?"

So Abraham good-naturedly loaded himself with the silver watch, Smith and Wesson, and knife of the farmer; mounted the farmer's horse, and off went the three towards Casey's Bluffs.

Keziah's collar-bone began to get painful and swell; and she had to keep her arm very



"You've about hit it there, old 'un!" said Kezziah, in a fat, rolling voice, impeded by gulps of tea; then she put down her cup, and sighed, and looked sadly at her husband, and continued in quite a low, changed voice: "It *is* a change, indeed, Abraham!"

For two whole months, Abraham Fleeter, the publican, enjoyed himself immensely amid his new surroundings; the unaccustomed excitements of the operations incidental to his new calling kept him interested and drove away ennui; and poor Mrs. Fleeter, seeing him contented for the first spell of time for many years, became almost reconciled to the new and unsuitable circumstances, and had really begun to believe that she should end by enjoying the life of a publican's wife, and wishing for nothing else.

"So long as it can keep him happy, poor dear!" she thought.

But one day, at the end of about ten weeks, Mr. Fleeter had been standing silently gazing out at the bar through the glass partition separating it from the parlour, when he suddenly said:—

"Kezziah, I'm sick of seeing people come into the bar and take a drink, and pay, and go out! I wish they'd do something new—come in on their heads, or something!"

She looked at him. Through the outer husk of the fat and contented publican she seemed to see the shadow of the discontented

writer of old days; Abraham looked appreciably thinner and less rosy—and a fortnight later the change had grown beyond doubt.

"Must have some more stout in?" said Abraham to John, the head barman. "Hang the stout—I'm sick of having in supplies of stout, and four ale, and gin, and things. How confoundedly——"

"Monotonous," said John. "Yes; isn't it? Who wants to be for ever ordering in supplies

of stuff just to have a lot of confounded, saucy people coming in and reducing the supplies again?"

"Just so!" said Mr. Fleeter. "Hang me if I wouldn't give all I have to——"

"Yes," said John; "what would you prefer to wake up as in the morning?"

Mr. Fleeter pondered a moment, and then said, "What I want is a life of change and adventure—none of your prosy, humdrum, vegetable existences!"

"Pioneer of civilization?" suggested John, drawing out his black note-book. "How's that, guv'nor?"

"That'll do—yes!" said the publican.

"All right, guv'nor—thankee," said John, moving away to serve two threes of Scotch cold.

At that moment Mrs. Fleeter came in from marketing.

"Cheer up, old lady!" said Abraham, with a strange chuckle. "We're sick of this, but it'll be all as right as a trivet to-morrow: you keep your eye on that, Kezzie!"

The publican's plump wife sat down and sobbed. The old discontent had come back to him in its full force; and he was restless again.

It fell upon her like some tremendous weight, and crushed her. Still, he was again looking forward to happiness in the morning; so she dried her eyes and tried to smile.

Abraham went out, and returned in half an hour with a small parcel; out of it he produced a revolver and cartridges. He went into the bar, and practised at the

still to prevent the spikes of bone wearing through the skin ; but she trudged on, and when she saw Abraham grinning with happiness and heard him whistle, she smiled and walked along with her usable hand on his. It was the middle of the next day before they reached Casey's Bluffs.

Casey's Bluffs was (or were) most a timber vitriol-saloon ; and Abraham and John promptly entered and called for drinks.

"Hold on !" said the landlord. "I'm thinking you're them same two innocents as is wanted for thieving and murder down to Kearneysville !"

In a flash Abraham's revolver was out, and

on his horse. There was another horse tethered outside ; and John mounted and pulled up Keziah behind him, and the three galloped away over the plain.

After hours they came to a cañon full of undergrowth, and dismounted for a rest. Abraham had brought away a small keg of whisky, and, knocking out the head, tipped it up to his mouth.

"There's hoofs !" yelled Abraham, breaking away from Keziah and rushing to the top of the gully followed by John. A dozen shots resounded ; and Abraham and John returned and sat down.

"If any more of the dogs come crowding



"IN A FLASH ABRAHAM'S REVOLVER WAS OUT."

the bullet passed through the landlord's brain.

Then Abraham jumped over the plank bar, and drank off three tumblers of vitriol with great promptness, while John looked on and smiled.

Abraham turned to leave ; but two men were entering the doorway. One was the landlord's brother, and, taking in the situation at a glance, drew on Abraham : Abraham and John replied ; and the two new-comers fell dead, and Abraham's arm was broken close to the elbow.

Then Abraham hurriedly knocked the head out of a cask of petroleum, lighted a handful of straw, and threw it in the oil covering the floor ; and, with his boots ablaze, leapt

in after us, they'll find their pards there," said Abraham, in a muddled way. "And they ken hev 'em—whaat ?"

Then he fell down asleep and lay there till dawn. Keziah still sat there, gazing at him in the grey light. "If it will only keep him happy, poor dear—if !" she said to herself.

Abraham woke, and clapped his hands to his head. He woke John with a kick—then turned deadly white at what he had done ; but John only sat up and smiled his repulsive smile.

"Say, pard," groaned Abraham. "Guess I've got a head onto me that I'd give away cheap. There'll be a pack of their blamed pals around in haaf a shake, or I hain't a livin' fact. Guess I'm about solid sick

o' thiser merriment; it's gettin' blamed monotonous; an' so's thiser arm o' mine, scorchin' like brimstone. Jest you take it as read that I'd trade away my skin to slide slick out o' this ken o' existence——"

and——" She sighed deeply, folded her hands, and murmured to herself: "It does not keep him happy, poor dear!" and a tear stole down her cheek.

"What form of existence would suit your



"IF IT WILL ONLY KEEP HIM HAPPY, POOR DEAR."

"What would you prefer to be at this moment?" asked John, bringing out the black pocket-book—very greasy—from his boot.

"Why—jest hold on—a bishop."

"I fear, my love, that absolute unsuitability of temperament unfits me for the Church!" murmured his lordship, gazing sadly out of the palace window at the silent cathedral close. "Heaven forbid that I should think of complaining; and yet, at times, I am unable to suppress a sense of monotony—a vague sense of yearning for some existence in which more change, more excitement——"

"Oh, Abraham!" said his wife—a grey-haired matron with sweet and thoughtful brow and an air of singular refinement—"it truly grieves me to hear this. For three days only you have filled your present office,

lordship's pleasure?" asked John, the venerable butler with the double-pointed white beard and strange tufted eyebrows.

For two days only was Abraham a dervish—for one day a Greek brigand—for one morning a king—for three hours a prize-fighter—for one hour a burglar.

He stood in the dock, charged with burglary at a house and the murder of the owner and two policemen.

The counsel for the defence—John—was speaking eloquently.

The whirl of change had bewildered Keziah; she had ceased to realize who and what she was. She sank down on the floor of the court and pressed her hands to her aching head, and rocked herself, and moaned: "It doesn't keep him happy, poor dear!"

J. F. SULLIVAN.



*A STORY FOR CHILDREN*

BY MRS. EGERTON EASTWICK.



ONCE, many years ago, there lived in Ombrelande a most beautiful Princess. Now, Ombrelande is a country which still exists, and in which many strange things still happen, although it is not to be found in any map of the world that I know of.

The Princess, at the time the story begins, was little more than a child, and while her growing beauty was everywhere spoken of, she was unfortunately still more noted for her selfish and disagreeable nature. She cared for nothing but her own amusement and pleasure, and gave no thought to the pain she sometimes inflicted on others in order to gratify her whims. It must be mentioned, however, as an excuse for her heartlessness, that, being an only child, she had been spoilt from her babyhood, and always allowed to have her own way, while those who thwarted her were punished.

One day the Princess Olga, that was her name, escaped from her governess and

attendants, and wandered into the wood which joined the gardens of the palace. It was her fancy to be alone; she would not even allow her faithful dachshund to bear her company.

The air was soft with the coming of spring; the sun was shining, the songs of the birds were full of gratitude and joy; the most lovely flowers, in all imaginable hues, turned the earth into a jewelled nest of verdure.

Olga threw herself down on a bank, bright with green moss and soft as a downy pillow. The warmth and her wanderings had already wearied her. She had neglected her morning studies, and left her singing-master waiting for her in despair in the music-room of the palace, that she might wander into the wood, and already the pleasure was gone.

She threw herself down on the bank and wished she was at home. There was one thing, however, of which she never tired, and that was her own beauty; so now, having nothing to do, and finding the world and the morning exceedingly tiresome and tame and dull, she unbound her long golden hair, and



spread it all around her like a carpet over the moss and the flowers, that she might admire its softness and luxuriance, by way of a change.

She held up the yellow meshes in her hands and drew them through her fingers, laughing to see the golden lights that played among the silky waves in the sunlight; then she fell to admiring the small white hands which held the treasure, holding them up against the light to see their almost transparent delicacy, and the pretty rose-pink lines where the fingers met. Certainly she made a charming picture, there in the sunshine among the flowers: the picture of a lovely innocent child, if she had been less vain and self-conscious.

Presently she heard a slight rustle of boughs behind her, and looking round she saw that she was no longer alone. Not many paces away, gazing at her with admiring wonder, stood a youth in the dress of a beggar, and over his shoulder looked the face of a young girl, which Olga was forced to acknowledge as lovely as her own. Now, the forest was the private property of the King, and the presence of these poor-looking people was certainly an intrusion.

"What are you doing here?" said Olga, haughtily. "Don't you know that you are trespassing? This wood belongs to the King, and is forbidden to tramps and beggars."

"We are no beggars, lady," said the youth. He spoke with great gentleness, but his voice was strong and sweet as a deep-toned bell. "To us no land is forbidden—and we own allegiance to no one."

"My father will have you put in prison," said Olga, angrily. "What is your name?"

"My name is Kasih."

"And that girl behind you—she is **hiding**—why does she not come forward?"

"It is Kasukah—my sister," he said, looking round with a smile; "she is shy, and frightened, perhaps."

"What outlandish names! You must be gipsies," said Olga, rudely, "and perhaps thieves."

"Indeed, lady, you are mistaken—on the contrary, it is in our power to bestow upon you many priceless gifts. But we have travelled far to find you, and are weary; only bid us welcome—let us go with you to the castle to rest—Kasukah—"

"How dare you speak so to me?" interrupted Olga, in a fury. "To the castle, indeed—what are you thinking of? There is a poor-house somewhere, I have heard the people say, maintained by my father's bounty out of the taxes—you can go there. Go at once—or——"

She raised the little silver-handled dog-whip which hung at her girdle. To do her



"GO AT ONCE."

justice, she was no coward. Kasukah had quite disappeared; the boy stood alone, looking at Olga with sad, reproachful eyes. For a moment she thought what a pity he was so poor and shabby; he had the face and bearing of a king. But she was too proud to change her tone.

"Or what?" he said.

"I will drive you away," she said, defiantly. Still Kasih did not move, and the next moment she had struck him smartly across the cheek with the whip.

He made no effort at self-defence or retaliation, only it seemed to her that she herself felt the pain of the wound. For a few instants she saw his sorrowful face grown white and stern, and the red, glowing scar which her whip had caused; then, like Kasukah, he seemed to vanish, and disappeared among the trees, while where he had stood a sunbeam crossed the grass.

Olga felt rather scared. She had been certainly very audacious, and it was odd that the boy should have shown no resentment. After all, she rather wished she had asked both him and his sister to stay, they might have proved amusing.

However, it was too late now; she could not call them back; so she thought she would return to the castle, she was beginning to feel hungry. So she went leisurely home, and, for the remainder of the day, proved a little more tractable than usual. She did not forget Kasih and his sister, and for a time wondered if they would ever seek her again; but the months went by and she saw them no more.

Now, as Olga grew older, of course the question arose of finding for her a desirable husband. And one suitor came and another, but none pleased her; and, indeed, more than one highly eligible young Prince was frightened away by her haughty manners and violent temper.

The truth was, that in secret she had not forgotten the face of Kasih, and she sometimes told herself that if she could find among her suitors one who was at all like him, and was also rich and powerful enough to give her all she desired in other ways, him she would choose. Kasih was certainly very handsome, in spite of his beggar's clothes; and suitably dressed, he would have been quite adorable. Also, it would be delightful to find a husband with such a gentle, yielding disposition, who never thought of resenting anything she said or did.

And one day a suitor came to the palace

who really made her heart beat a little faster than usual at first; he was so like the lost Kasih. But unfortunately he was only the younger son of a Royal Duke, and could offer her nothing better than a small, insignificant Principality and an income hardly sufficient to pay her dressmaker's bills. So it was no use thinking about him, and he was dismissed with the others. Olga's father began to think his daughter would never find all she required in a husband, but would remain for ever in the ancestral castle: as every year she grew more disagreeable, the prospect did not afford him entire satisfaction.

At length, however, appeared a very powerful Prince, who peremptorily demanded her hand. He was a big, strong man, and carried on his wooing in such a masterful manner that even Olga was a little afraid of him. At the same time he loaded her with jewels and beautiful presents of all kinds, brought from his own country. He was said to possess fabulous wealth; and, partly because she feared him, and partly because of her pride and ambition, haughty Olga surrendered and promised to become his wife. Having once gained her consent, Hazil would brook no delay.

The date was immediately fixed, and the grandest possible preparations made for the wedding. No expense was spared, innumerable guests were invited, while those less favoured among the people came from far and near to see the bride's wedding clothes and to bring her presents. Indeed, the King of Ombrelande was forced to add a new suite of rooms to the castle to contain the wedding gifts and display them to the best advantage.

Such a sight as the bridal train had never been seen before, for it was spangled all over with diamonds so closely that Olga when she moved looked like a living jewel—and her veil was sprinkled with diamond dust, which sparkled like myriads of tiny stars.

The evening before the wedding day Olga sat alone in her chamber, thinking of the magnificence that awaited her, also a little of Hazil, the bridegroom. She had that day seen Hazil, in a passion, punish, with his own hands, a servant for disobedience, and the sight had displeased her. It had been an ugly and unpleasant exhibition, but worse than all, the sight of the poor man's wounds had recalled that livid mark across the fair cheek of Kasih which she herself had wrought. The boy's gentle face, which had become so stern when they parted, the laughing eyes of Kasukah, quite haunted her

to-night. She thought she would like to make amends for her rudeness; if she knew where they were, she would ask brother and sister to her wedding. And just as she was so thinking, a soft tap sounded at the door, and before she could ask who was there (she thought it must surely be the Queen, her mother, come to bid her a last good-night, and felt rather displeased at the interruption) the door opened, and a stranger entered the room.

Olga saw a tall figure, draped from head to foot in a soft darkness that shrouded her like a cloud, obscuring even her face.

"Who are you?" said Olga, "and what do you want in my private apartments? Who dared admit you without my leave?"

"I asked admittance of no one, for none can refuse me or bar my way," answered the stranger, in a voice like the sighing of soft winds at night. "My name is Kasuhama—I am the foster-sister of Kasukah and Kasih, of whom you were just now thinking, and I come to bring you a wedding gift."

She withdrew her veil slightly as she spoke, and Olga saw a pale, serene face, sorrowful in expression, and framed with snow-white hair, but yet bearing a likeness, that was like a memory, to Kasih and Kasukah.

"I wish," said Olga, petulantly, "that Kasih had brought it to-morrow and been present at our feast. I would have seen that he was properly attired for the occasion. Your sad face is hardly suitable for a wedding feast. Shall I ever see him again?"

"As to that, I cannot answer," said Kasuhama, gravely; "but your wedding is no place either for him or Kasukah. As for me—I go everywhere. I am older in appearance than the others, you see, though, in reality, it is not so. But that is because they have immortal souls and I have none. The

time will come when I must bid them farewell. We but journey together for a time."

The air of the room seemed to have become strangely chill and cold, and Olga shivered. "I am tired," she said, "and I wish to rest. Will you state your business and leave me?"

Experience had made her less abruptly rude than when she dismissed Kasih in the wood; also this cold, pale, soulless woman struck her with something like awe.

"Yes—I will say farewell to you now. In the future you will know me better and perhaps learn not to fear me—but I will leave with you the present I came to bring."

She held out a necklace of pearls more wonderful than even Olga had ever seen. They were large and round, lustrous and fair, but as Olga took them in her hands it seemed to her that, in their mysterious depths, each jewel held imprisoned a living soul.

"Wear them," said Kasuhama; "by them you will remember me."

Almost involuntarily Olga raised her hands and fastened the necklace around her slender throat. The clasps just met, and the pearls glistened like dewdrops on her bosom—or were they tears?

But in the centre of the necklace was a vacant space.

"There is one lost!" she said.

"Not lost, but missing," answered Kasuhama, softly. "One day the place will be filled,

and the necklace will be complete." And with these words she waved her hand to Olga, and drawing her dusky veil around her, quitted the room as quietly as she had entered.

The ceremonies of the following day passed off without let or hindrance, and Olga, dazzled by her grandeur, would have thought little of her visitor of the previous night—would indeed have believed the



"I COME TO BRING YOU A WEDDING GIFT."

incident a dream, a trick of the imagination—but for the necklace. It still circled her throat, for her utmost efforts proved unavailing to unfasten the clasps, and everyone stared and marvelled at the wonderful pearls which seemed endowed with a curious fascination.

Only Prince Hazil was displeased ; for he

smiled, for she knew that even his great strength would be unavailing, and so it proved ; and although on reaching their destination Hazil sent for all the Court jewellers, neither then nor at any other time could the most experienced among them loosen Kasuhama's magic gift from its place.

The months rolled by, and Olga reigned a



"HE TRIED TO TAKE THE JEWELS  
FROM THEIR RESTING-PLACE."

could not bear his bride to wear jewels not his gift, and that outshone by their lustre any he could produce ; also, he was jealous of the unknown giver. When the wedding was over, and they were travelling away to the distant castle where the first weeks of Olga's new life were to be spent, he tried to take the jewels from their resting-place. Olga

Queen in her husband's country, but her life was a sad one. Hazil was often cruel, and it seemed as though he were bent upon heaping upon her all the contumely and harshness she had shown to others. Still her proud spirit refused to yield. She met him with defiance in secret, and openly bore herself with so much cold haughtiness that

no one dared to hint at her trouble, much less to offer her any sympathy.

But when alone in her chamber she saw again the faces of Kasih and Kasukah; but more often that of Kasuhama. For the necklace was still there to remind her; the pearls still shone with mysterious, undimmed lustre; indeed, they seemed to grow more numerous, and to be woven into more delicate and intricate designs, as time went on. Still, however, the place for the central jewel remained unfilled. Often Olga herself tried with passionate, almost agonizing, effort to break their fatal chain, for every day their weight grew heavier, until she seemed to bear fetters of iron about her fair throat, and when the pearls touched her, they burned as though the iron were molten.

Still, in public they were universally admired, and gratified vanity enabled her to bear the pain and inconvenience without open complaint.

But one day was placed in her arms another treasure—a beautiful living child, and she was so fair that they called her Pearl, but the Queen hated the name. The child, however, found a soft place in Hazil's rough nature; indeed, he idolized her; but Olga rarely saw her little daughter, and left her altogether to the care of the nurses and attendants.

So little Pearl grew very fragile, and had a wistful look in her blue eyes, as though waiting for something that never came; for in her grand nurseries and among all her beautiful playthings she found no mother-love to perfect and nourish her life.

And all this time Olga had seen no more of Kasih or Kasukah: had, indeed, almost forgotten what their faces were like. But one

night, at the close of a grand entertainment, she was summoned in haste to the nursery. The Court physician came to tell her that little Pearl was ill.

Olga was very weary. Never had the necklace seemed so heavy a burden as that night, or the Court functions so endless. She rose, however, and followed the physician at once. Hazil, the King, was far away, visiting a distant part of his great territory; he would be terribly angry if anything went wrong with little Pearl during his absence.

She reached the room where the child

lay on her lace-covered pillows, very white and small, but with a happy smile on her tiny face, a happy light in her blue eyes, which looked satisfied at last. But Olga knew that the smile was not for her, that the child did not recognise her, would never know her any more.

Someone else stood beside the couch: a stranger with bent head and loving, outstretched arms, and little Pearl prattled in baby language of playthings and flowers and sunlight and green fields. Olga drew near and watched, helpless and terrified, with a strange despair at her heart. And soon the little

voice grew weaker—but the happy smile deepened as the blue eyes closed.

And there was a great silence in the nursery. The stranger lifted the little form in his arms, and as he raised his head Olga saw his face, and she knew that it was Kasih come at last, for across his cheek still glowed the red line of the wound which her hand had dealt many years before. His eyes met hers with the same stern sadness of reproach as when they had parted—then she remembered no more.



"THE STRANGER LIFTED THE LITTLE FORM IN HIS ARMS."

When the Queen recovered from her swoon they told her that her little daughter was dead ; but she knew that Kasih had taken her. She said no word, and showed few signs of grief, but remained outwardly proud and cold, though her heart was wrung with a pain and fear she could not understand. She was full of wrath against Kasih, who, she thought, had taken this way of avenging the old insult she had offered him. Yet the sorrowful look in his eyes haunted her.

The pearls about her neck pressed upon her with a heavier weight, and in her sleep she saw them as in a vision, and in their depths she discerned strange pictures : faces she had known years ago and long since forgotten, the faces of those whom her pride and harshness had caused to suffer, who had appealed to her for love and pity and were denied.

And then in her dream she understood that the pearls were in truth the tears of those she had made sorrowful, kept and guarded by Kasih in his treasure-house, but given to her by Kasuhama to be her punishment.

Before many days had passed, the King Hazil returned, and when he learned that his little daughter was dead, he summoned the Queen to his presence. Olga went haughtily, for she dared not altogether disobey. Then Hazil loaded her with reproaches, and in his anger he told her many, many hard things, and the words sank deep into her heart. It seemed, presently, that she could bear no more, and hardly knowing what she did, she cast herself at his feet and prayed for mercy.

She asked him to remember that the child had been hers also—that she had loved it. But Hazil, in his bitterness, laughed in her face and told her she was a monster, that it

was for lack of her love that the child had died ; that she had never loved anything—not even herself. He turned away to nurse his own grief, and Olga dragged herself up and went away to the silent room, and knelt by the little couch where she had seen Kasih take away her child.

And there at length the blessed tears fell, for she was humbled at last, and sorry, and quite desolate and alone. And it seemed to her that through her tears she once more saw Kasih, and that he held towards her the little Pearl, more beautiful than ever, and the child put its arms about her neck, and she was comforted.

Well, from that day the life of the Queen was changed. When next she looked at the pearl necklace she found that a jewel, more beautiful than any of the others, had been added to it ; and she knew that the tear of her humiliation had filled the vacant place.

And henceforth she often saw the face of Kasih : near the bed of the dying, beside all who needed consolation, kindness, and love, there she met him constantly. Near him sometimes she caught a glimpse of bright Kasukah, but for a while, more often of Kasuhama.

The face of the white-haired sister, however, had grown very gentle and kind, and she whispered of a time when Kasukah should take her place for ever—for Love and Joy are eternal, but Sorrow has an end. And with every act of unselfish kindness and love that the Queen Olga performed the weight and burden of the necklace grew less, until the day that it fell from her of its own accord, and she was able to give it back to Kasuhama. And Hazil, the King, seeing how greatly Olga was changed, in time grew gentle towards her, and loved her ; for Kasuhama softened his heart.





"THE MASS 'STRUCK SALIM FULL ON THE FOREHEAD."

(See page 366.)

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## *The Treasure of Nephron.*

BY EDEN PHILLPOTTS.



NEAR the huge pyramids of Dashur, and dwarfed by their size, there may be found upon the confines of the Nubian desert a sepulchral mound, once also a pyramid, now little more than a large and irregular mass of shattered limestone. Beside the adjacent giants this pyramid of Nephron appears little more than a rubbish heap; but seen apart, the mass is of no small elevation, while matters of considerable interest lie entombed within it. Just short of a hundred years ago came forth from its interior the mummy of that notable person whose grave it was; and skilled Egyptologists, their success at that time much accelerated by the discovery of the Rosetta Stone, soon deciphered the hieroglyphics which adorned dead Nephron's coffin and sepulchre. The withered brown carcass, here "sealed from the moth and the owl and the flittermouse" for a space of time extending over three thousand years, had once been a high priest who ministered at the shrine of Horus, in the Middle Age of Egypt, and here, moved thereto by opinions peculiar to himself, the bygone cleric, if his story might be credited, had caused to be buried with him much of the wealth accumulated on earth during a lengthy and prosperous career. This fact was not remarkable, but what struck experts as strange has to be told. Though the cryptic chamber in which Nephron's corpse had been discovered was spacious, nothing but the dead priest himself occupied it, and no amount of research revealed his alleged treasure.

All that French and English savants could think upon to do was done, and with assistance from the fellaheen of the adjacent village, they probed the mass of limestone to its core, and made searching exploration for the "gold and silver and Orient gems" declared to be hidden within Nephron's shattered mausoleum; but nothing rewarded

the search save the granite presentment of a Krio-Sphinx which blocked one end of a subterranean gallery in the pyramid. To remove the ram-headed monster was impossible; it formed an integral portion of the mass; and no amount of poking and prying had revealed in the solid body of it any receptacle or chamber which might represent the portal of a treasure-house.

Thus, then, stood human knowledge upon the subject of Nephron's pyramid on the forenoon of a day in summer some fifty years ago.

Two Arabs sat smoking cigarettes not far distant from the high priest's monument on this occasion, and watched a cavalcade departing over the sand in the direction of Cairo.

"They have failed, like all who came before them," said young Faraj, the Nile boatman.

"Verily," answered his friend and companion, Salim Subra, a man whose occupation, if he had any, was that of pyramid guide to tourists. "Allah wills not that Nephron's treasures go to fat the pockets of these pale, steel-eyed infidels. They come and grub here and search each nook and cranny and jackal-lair, to no purpose. And these have wasted their sweat like the rest."

He pointed to half a dozen Englishmen with their baggage and attendants. They represented a learned Commission which, amongst other more successful explorations, had devoted a portion of its time to renewed study and research in Nephron's tomb. But no fortune rewarded their efforts, and as they departed on asses, with camels and yelling fellaheen to bear the baggage, they cried "Sour grapes" in a manner quite unscientific. One grey, spectacled personage doubted not that the treasure, even if discovered, would add little to human knowledge, and possibly be found of no intrinsic value whatever; another professor gave it as his opinion that a generation of men long dead had discovered Nephron's

gold and silver, perhaps thousands of years before, and that any further search must be vain. All greatly wished that the gigantic and perfect Krio-Sphinx might be dragged forth from its many thousand years of night to adorn the garden of the Gizeh Museum of Cairo; but that was beyond their power to achieve, for to disentomb the statue it would have been necessary to demolish the shattered mountain that contained it. So the erudite English departed with no greater riches than those a measuring tape could furnish; and Faraj and Salim watched them go.

In Dashur the treasure of Nephron had grown into a tradition, but though many an Arab of the village knew the pyramid and its dark ways as well as his own mud cottage, none had yet reached the rumoured gold. Yet each successive generation became fired with the hope in turn. Nephron's hoard was a real fact to Dashur minds; and not a few lazy men wasted half their lives in vain dreams of the bygone priest, and vain subterranean searching after his wealth. A hundred stories of weird adventures and strange meetings with jinn and marids in the bat-haunted gloom of the pyramid were familiar to the ears of the fellaheen. Blood, too, had been shed there by an unknown hand, and one gloomy chamber was held sacred to the shade of an unhappy traveller from Alexandria, whose assassin had never been traced.

"The treasures are safe," said Faraj. "They will pass into the hands of the faithful in Allah's own time. Inshallah! He doeth what seemeth good to him. Allah send we may yet prevail against the evil mystery lying between what man hid there in the morning of the world and our living eyes to-day. Our compact was to share Nephron's riches as we share love and kindred affection. So be it. We may yet succeed, Salim."

"How did they prosper?" continued Faraj, regarding the retreating explorers.

"Neither better nor worse than others. As a man with deep knowledge of the pyramid, they engaged me, and I showed them all I know and did their bidding."

"All you know," Salim Subra?"

The other laughed, doffed his fez, and passed a hand over his closely-cropped head.

"All save only the hole under the left paw of the stone monster they call Krio-Sphinx. That I left them to find themselves."

"Did they?"

"Truly. Nothing was too difficult for them. They discovered it and descended into the little chamber below; and they held that hole to be the place of a coffin."

"Did they question you concerning the opening at the side of it?"

"They did, and thrust their heads in and lowered a line which told them naught. They asked if any boy small enough might be found to get through the aperture, and I shook my head, but assured them that one in the past, of small stature, had entered and found only a second little empty chamber like the first."

Faraj laughed.

"These northern giants, with their huge shoulders, strange garments, and stiff joints, might well believe nothing bigger than a young child could pass that way. How if you yourself had climbed through before their eyes?"

"They would have doubted they saw aright."



"THE TREASURES ARE SAFE," SAID FARAJ.

But I did no such thing. Yet I only spoke the truth to them."

"Not all of it."

"Why, what more was there to tell them?"

"That from the second chamber falls a sheer well, down to the heart of the earth for all we can say. You were dumb as to that dark drop into nothingness known only to you and me among the living."

"And we might as well not know it. The thing is beyond human power to probe. It may reach straight to the central fires, for all we can tell. 'Tis beyond the power of any living thing but a snake to probe. On steel and Koran we swore to share such fortune as Fate might store for us in Nephron's grave or elsewhere, Faraj Tabit; but it will not come through that black throat. The well leads down to death and only death, as I have seen in dreams."

Though not of kin, a greater love than that for the most part obtaining between brothers marked the friendship of these young men; yet close upon the very occasion of this discourse arose the first cloud between them—a cloud destined to produce tragedy as strange, and sequel as startling, as any recorded in all the history of Nephron's pyramid. Faraj Tabit, the elder, worked upon the river, and devoted his leisure to prying with Salim amid the great relics of the past at Dashur; while his friend, though poor also, yet had prospects of a better position to come. In Cairo dwelt his uncle, 'Aziz-ul-Hajj, a vendor of curios and objects of art—an old, wifeless gentleman whose wealth was rumoured to be considerable, and who showed amiability towards his nephew, though he had at no time assisted him to better his worldly position. The young men had little in common save good looks, mutual regard, and a great ambition to come at wealth and fortune. One other interest they indeed shared—their love for the same woman—Laylá Birbâri.

A woman we call Laylá, in that she was wife-old; but the girl had seen no more than thirteen summers, in which time, after the hot-house fashion of the East, she arrived at physical maturity. An olive-skinned and bright-eyed maid was she, with cherry-red lips and a smile usually hidden from young, fiery hearts by her hideous yashmak of tawdry, flush-coloured cotton stamped with some conventional arabesque. The dark blue robe of the fellaheen women encompassed her; and beneath the bright beads and coins that rose and fell upon her breast was a little heart as hard and calcu-

lating as ever beat in an ice-cold Northern bosom. Nobody knew better than Laylá the power of her dark eyes and pretty voice. She was a flirt, too—in so far as an Eastern woman of respectable position can be—and the homage of the men brightened a lonely existence. With her father, Nasim Birbâri, she dwelt; her own mother was dead, but Nasim's living wife, luckily for Laylá, was an amiable soul, and she enjoyed a measure of liberty beyond that of most unmarried Moslem girls in Dashur. This she employed as she pleased, and was at present engaged in a brisk interchange of love promises with Faraj Tabit; whereas in the case of Salim, their intercourse had by no means reached so far. The young men had acted each as his disposition dictated, and while Faraj was content with his sweetheart's assurance of love, Salim, more cautious and more conventional, had sought Laylá's father before pushing his suit. One therefore rejoiced secretly in the girl's love and promise; the other had reason to believe that his expectations from his uncle, the old virtuoso and curio dealer in Cairo, would carry the necessary weight with Nasim Birbâri, on whose decision lay the final disposal of Laylá.

## II.

A WEEK passed by, and the festival of the Mahmoud was at hand. On the occasions of this celebration, thousands of fellaheen from the surrounding villages flock to Cairo that they may witness the departure of the Sacred Carpet to Mecca. The festival is one of great rejoicing—a red-letter day in the calendar of every right Moslem. Before this event, however, the hopes and fears of the lovers were set at rest.

Salim Subra acted with the greater promptitude, and an hour after leaving Faraj he was drinking coffee with Nasim Birbâri and setting out his case to the best advantage. In the end he won the old man to his way of thinking, and then departed to wait with what patience he might for more intelligence. Meantime, the father had a conversation with his daughter, and found her extremely pliable.

"I had spoken words with Faraj, the boatman," she said, "but they were to no purpose, and no more than the jests of friends. Salim is of different clay; besides, when his uncle shall die, great store of riches must fall into his life and better it. I will marry him in due season."

When therefore Faraj, a day later, paid his visit to Laylá's home, he found himself in the cold. His sweetheart he did not see, and

he departed in the extremity of wrath. He showered bitter words on Nasim Birbâri, taxed him with selling his daughter to the highest bidder, and refused to believe that Laylâ herself had abandoned him thus readily for one of better worldly prospects. Accordingly, he waited until he might come upon her and learn from her own red lips the truth. But such a meeting Laylâ little desired, and kept within doors to avoid it. Her action only led heart-stricken Faraj into further error. Now he openly declared that foul means had been taken to keep Laylâ from him, and that she was even at that hour shut up within her father's house, a prisoner. But though Laylâ appeared not, Faraj met with Salim. On the dawn of the great festival they stood face to face again; and thus it happened.

Salim Subra, elated beyond measure at his success, had arranged to accompany his future wife and father-in-law to the festival; and after the celebration it was proposed that the young man should call upon his uncle, 'Aziz-ul-Hajj, and introduce to the curio merchant the fair Laylâ and her father.

So Salim, adorned in his richest garments, proceeded at early light to seek his friends; and as he did so there passed, desert-wards, not noting him, his rival. For the Orient mind cruelty has a sort of fascination; and the spectacle of his listless and defeated friend woke no pity in Salim's heart just then. He remembered, too, that he was full early for the meeting with Nasim and his daughter, and therefore, in an evil moment for himself, he followed Faraj, as that solitary soul proceeded despondent towards the ruined pyramids under a black cloud of everlasting despair. The young man now regarded himself as a victim of dark plots and superior cunning. He fully believed that Laylâ was by force withheld from him, and that, in the prison seclusion of her father's home, she suffered even as did he. Thus in a dangerous and deadly mood was Faraj when Salim, with pretended unconcern, approached and walked beside him beneath the earliest gold of a risen sun.

"How is it with thee, Faraj Tabit?" he asked. "May perdition eat thy foes."

"Thou callest a curse upon thine own vile head in saying it, son of a dog!" thundered back the other.

"Nay, friend that was, we have fought a fair battle, and this is no language from vanquished to victor."

The eyes of Faraj burnt in his head, and dark hate shot from them upon the smirking

Salim. One stood all smiles and brave apparel, the other was in his ragged working clothes, and his mind raged so that the storm of its working blackened his face. Faraj valued his own life at less than a piastre just then, and his foe would have been safer with a hungry Nubian lion; but the victor knew it not, and poured oil upon the flame of the other's wrath.

"You do not understand," he said. "Laylâ comes to me of her free will, because she loves me better than she can love you. She has listened to nobody and obeyed nothing but her heart's voice. A woman's heart lies not."

"A man's tongue does; and thou art he. Lies bubble from your lips, so that Allah sees you not for the black smoke of them, that hides you from Him. But Iblis, the father of all the devils, knows you, and is impatient for you."

"This is the cry of a child, angry that he has lost his toy. You crowed too loud, Faraj Tabit; you crowed too loud, and now your case is the worse. Laylâ will twine about my heart——"

"Let her if she will; but, by the breath of God, it shall be cold first!"

As he spoke the boatman, shaking with passion, stooped, picked up a fragment of stone, placed to his hand by the Fiend, and hurled it swift and straight. The mass struck Salim full on the forehead, its force in some sort broken by the white turban wound about his fez; but even thus the blow was enough to slay a stronger man than the young Arab. His hands shot into the air, then he fell heavily backward and lay still, while from his head wound a thick stream of blood, sucked up as it flowed by the yellow sand. No groan or cry marked his downfall. Death, terrific and sudden as from stroke of lightning, leaden bullet, or paw of savage beast, had swept him from the living in his hour of triumph. Profound silence followed, broken only by the distant sound of a Muezzin's call from the far-off minaret. Like a bird's note it came through the thin air, but Faraj Tabit heard it not. He stood motionless, with no visible life nearer to him than the vultures that soared like specks aloft in the golden morning. They indeed saw and knew, but nothing else. For one mad moment the man fell on his knees and began scooping sand with both hands upon the supine shape before him; but as he did so, there came to his ears a sound of laughter, and he thought his kind were near at hand, and desisted, and rose. Sudden terror, that he might be captured

with his hands red, got hold upon him, and he departed, slinking in the western shadows of the scattered rocks, like a pariah dog. Salim Subra would be missed by those departing for the Mahmoud. He might be sought and even found, though that was improbable, for the place of his destruction lay without Dashur, in a lonely, rock-strewn spot, the home of the jackal and sand-coloured snake. In reality, no one was near. Faraj had heard ghost-voices only, awakened by his own thick-coming fears; but he stayed no longer, left the rough, crater-like ring of scattered limestone where Salim lay, and hurried to the safety and darkness of a sanctuary at hand. Here stood the gaunt pyramid of Nephron, and the murderer soon plunged into its heart, there only to find terrors more fearful than any the sunshine held.

For a short time, as he rested at the portal of the main tunnel, the man's fear vanished. Recollection of the other's treachery, as he imagined it, returned, and he felt glad again at the thing he had done. He steeled his heart, told himself he was Allah's instrument to shorten the span of a vile life, and then concerned himself with thoughts for his own safety. He would remain in the secret places of the pyramid until nightfall, then depart, cross the Nile and enter Cairo, where there was small fear of being discovered. So resolving, he burrowed into the subterranean ways, and hastened so suddenly from the light that his eyes throbbed under the inky blackness. Now chaos returned to his mind again, and a million superstitious

fears, bred of his sin, made the familiar recesses of the pyramid seem strange, and filled the velvet pall of that eternal night with many eyes, that shone as red as blood. The echoes were awake and alive, and the rustle and squeak of the bats that dwelt here by day was magnified upon his ear into serpent hissings and the voices of strange, monstrous things, half man, half reptile.

Faraj knew where candles were hidden, and presently, lighting one, he strove with its

flickering flame to banish the horrors of his mind now taking shape and voice about him. But the light only awoke fresh terrors, flung back the sides of the surrounding gloom, and set a demon dance of shadows everywhere. Black limbs were thrust out of the dark corners, vague, bodiless heads grinned from the roof, and headless bodies took substance and passed from the gloom into the light, from the light into the gloom again. Armless hands with crooked fingers, like

hairy spiders, stole along the floor and gripped his skirts, then hung upon them as he moved; a hundred nameless horrors crowded and gibbered and squeaked within sight of his eyes: and the candle itself, which summoned this fearful throng, burnt like a red eye from



"THE LIGHT AWOKE FRESH TERRORS."

the brow of some Cyclopean abortion created from the rock where Faraj had set it up. He struck out the light to banish this pandemonium, then flung himself upon the dry dust of the tunnel, and there lay with his head on his arms, his fingers thrust in his ears and his eyes tightly closed. Presently he fell into a sort of trance, while the past retraced its steps before him. Again he slew the slain, dreamed that he plunged a knife into Laylá's breast also, and



then into his own. Together they woke on the shores of Paradise, but the murdered man was there before them, and Salim took Laylá into his arms, while winged things with swords of live fire thrust the murderer forth. From such nightmare rest he presently awoke and sought the mouth of the pyramid.

Far distant, at the embouchure, a mellow lance of light told that the sun had westered, and that within a few hours darkness would return and enable him to fly. Then Faraj lighted his candle again, shivered at the cold around him, and, his fears now decreased, passed onward into the depths, where one long passage terminated abruptly between the paws of the great granite sphinx with a ram's head already mentioned. Beneath one paw of the monster appeared a little receptacle, and from this a second, like to it, might be reached by a narrow aperture. Here it was that the ingenuity of the English explorers failed them, for the opening between the two chambers was so small that the possibility of anything larger than a dog creeping through it had not entered their speculations. Nevertheless, both Faraj and Salim, if no others, could get into the inner chamber, for the feat to a narrow-shouldered and lithe native was not extraordinary.

The man now standing before the Krio-Sphinx, for no reason that he could have named to himself, presently wriggled into this second receptacle beneath it, put his candle on a ledge, and squatted down in a place scarce large enough to hold a coffin. This was the spot which Salim Subra had assured the explorers held nothing; and in that he spoke the truth; but at one end of the place there descended a circular narrow shaft into the bowels of the pyramid; and of this he had not spoken. To him and to Faraj alone of men was this dark channel known; but neither at any time had descended into it, for the sides were steep and the air below the surface very foul. They had often cast down stones, but no answering echo returned, and thus they assumed the tunnel must be bottomless and beyond human skill to search or fathom.

Above this black hole Faraj sat, and the cloud fell again upon his heart before the spectacle of a blood-stained future. Laylá had sunk to a spectre in his mind; only the dead man lying outside in the sand occupied it. He pictured the jackals when night hid Salim Subra; he saw the naked-necked vultures that wait not for darkness. For a

moment the thought of self-destruction crossed his mind. Here, at his feet, gaped a ready death, and no human eye would ever see his mangled limbs, no beast rend them. To fling himself down this dark mouth of stone would be the work of a moment, and now death began to look a better thing than the haunted, hunted life awaiting him on earth. He almost forgot his crime before the arguments for and against self-slaughter. The thought of it grew less and less terrible; while each moment now made life appear a vainer business. He saw himself meeting with Salim in the shadow world, and there came a lust and a yearning to cross the dark threshold and see and know what lay beyond. He crept near to the black aperture in the floor of the narrow chamber, and let his legs dangle over. Voices called him from below—the pleasant, happy voices of women. He edged nearer until he rested in a position of utmost peril on the brink. Taking his candle he dropped it down, and he saw the light flicker redly down the funnel of stone, then vanish. Impenetrable gloom now wrapped him, and out from it crept and glimmered the old shapes and faces and burning eyes. Weird creatures with strange double heads and unfamiliar limbs arose and passed in procession before him. The gods of the dead were there—the gods of ancient Egypt, with heads of men and women, of bird and beast. Sanctified creatures moved and crawled about him: huge live scarabs with opal eyes; cats; snorting bulls, that puffed sweet breath into his face; crocodiles, with great golden rings in their long snouts. He heard music, and saw bygone men, as from some Egyptian frieze, marching on either side of a bier. And upon it lay no mummied corpse, but Salim Subra, with his great toes tied together, salt upon his breast, and a silk shroud wrapped about him, after the modern fashion of the Moslem. The dead lay calm, and his eyes were shut, but on his brow was black blood. The fresco figures passed silent and grim; their song died in a sigh of cold wind, and Faraj, knowing that another had yet to come, crept nearer the shaft and watched and waited. He would remain in the land of the living until Death himself appeared, then he meant to fling himself downward and so die, that he might escape Death. He laughed at this conceit, and an echo answered him again, while it seemed that an invisible hand suddenly touched his—a hand hard and cold as stone. Mad with fear, Faraj Tabit tore himself from it and dropped into the pit

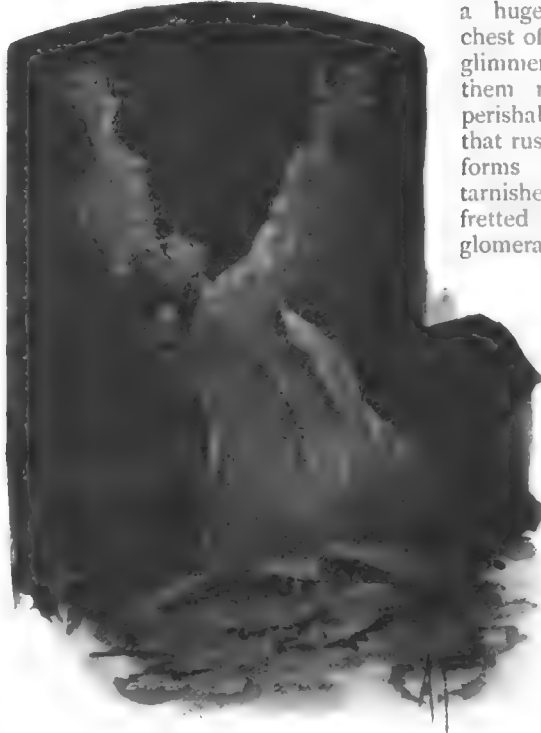
yawning at his feet. One shriek echoed with a hundred voices, then consciousness departed from him, and he fell insensible through the black air—to Iblis and the abode of evil Ifrits and foul Jinn.

### III.

BUT it was in the flesh and not the spirit that Faraj found himself, on again opening his eyes and recovering consciousness some seconds later. He moved this way and that, felt himself, discovered himself recumbent on a pile of some soft material, and found himself unscathed, though he experienced a little difficulty in breathing. About him were heavy stones, and now he realized why these fragments, thrown from above in the past, had brought no answering sound to the ears of Salim and himself, for they had fallen into thick, soft dust. The unearthly silence that ever brooded in the heart of the pyramid hung heavy about him; his mind grew clear again, and his only speculation was as to how far he had fallen and how long he might expect to survive in his present position. A cautious survey by touch told that the place in which he now stood trapped was small. He felt round its walls, and in doing so set his foot on some sharp object, and felt a pang. Bending, hot blood from the wounded member flowed upon his hand, and he tore a bandage from his skirt and bound it up. Then he remembered the candle he had flung down before him, and now felt through the thick dust of the floor in hope that it might come to his hand. Here he was fortunate, for he soon recovered the candle, and relighted it; and, though it burnt but dimly under the heavy air, the light given was sufficient to show Faraj the nature of his new environment. The place was empty save for a deep layer of dust and an object of strange appearance that filled half the chamber. It looked, at first sight, like some enormous insect, lying upon its back,

with long twisted legs extended in the air above it, and a glimmering body of irregular shape beneath them. But closer investigation brought a truer explanation. The bent and twisted bands of metal were all that remained

of what had once been a huge, brass-bound chest of wood; and that glimmering mass within them represented imperishable stones, gold that rusts not, and other forms and shapes of tarnished silver and fretted metal. The agglomeration stood three feet high and covered a considerable space. From it gleamed red rubies and green emeralds, the flash and twinkle of diamonds, the soft fire of opals, the lustre of red gold—treasures all that had not answered light with light for more than



"HE FELL INSENSIBLE."

three thousand years. Strange mystic jewels lay there, the use of which was long vanished out of man's knowledge; time had gnawed the silver into black ruins, and many of the treasures of necklace and fillet and pectoral were in part destroyed; but unutterable gems and feats of workmanship, scarce to be credited, still remained to glitter on man's eyes again after their centuries of repose. Golden hawks, with diamond breasts and lapis lazuli wings, were here; crystal sphinxes, and wrought ivory plaques crusted with gems; the ureus and winged globe of majesty fashioned in precious stones; regal diadems; statuettes of gods and goddesses with diamond eyes; lotus lilies with petals of beaten gold and emerald leaves—these and a hundred other marvellous achievements of men long since dust, here, escaped from the clutch of time, glimmered and shone in the mass of treasure as Faraj turned it about beneath the light of his waning candle.

Here at last, at this unexpected moment, appeared the treasure of Nephron to the eye of a murderer and a prisoner; to him who could neither personally profit by the discovery nor proclaim it to the world. One other man alone knew of the tunnel down which Faraj had fallen, and that man was dead. The thing



"AT LAST APPEARED THE TREASURE OF NEPHRON."

desired, dreamed of, prayed for, had come indeed; but a time must be at hand when this lonely wretch would be glad enough to barter every gem and jewel of that vast hoard for a jug of water and a crust of bread. Lust of life reasserted itself in the man before his discovery. Egyptian justice fifty years ago was no immaculate thing, and now he dwelt with throbbing brain on the possibilities of salvation from death which the treasure of Nephron might compass for him. His light began to wane and the hot wax touched his hand. He turned, therefore, and continued his scrutiny with special reference to the dark entrance of the treasure-house down which he had fallen. That he should have received no injury argued an inconsiderable descent, and for a moment hope flickered again in the dead ashes of his soul. Above him opened the hole down which he had come, and below it lay the

dust. Investigation showed the aperture in the roof to be just above his reach, but by piling the treasure of Nephron below it, and standing upon the glittering heap, Faraj could get his head and shoulders into the tunnel and hold the candle above him. Then the man's heart leapt, for on a level with his eyes appeared the first of a succession of foot-holes cut deep in the stone. It was clear that the shaft had formed a regular means of entrance to the treasure-house. Chance had opened the upper end beneath the Krio-Sphinx; and Faraj now doubted not that it was within his power to ascend again to sunlight and life if he would do so. Yet upon this discovery he hesitated. The man with whom he had sworn to share such fortune as should fall to him was gone beyond call of gold or silver or precious stone. The old friendship, dimmed by no vision of Laylá's bright eyes, recurred to his mind; and for the first time personal fear gave place to personal sorrow before the deed he had done. His own safety gave him less and less concern.

Among Moslems none may testify of what he has not seen with his own eyes; therefore no one but himself could declare his crime. Only God, and the devil, and the dead, had power to accuse him. With the possibility of an increase of life before him its desirability waned. He thought of the riches beneath his feet. After all, though they seemed so vain, such an anti-climax to the great tragedy of his life when first he found them, yet they had made it possible for him to save that wretched existence if now he chose so to do. Without them piled beneath his feet he could nevermore have left the treasure house.

Long he debated with himself, then determined at least to clamber back into the world and see the sun and moon again before he died. The toil of ascending was laborious enough to one faint for food and drink, and with a mind greatly overwrought; but Faraj accomplished his design, struggled with bleed-

ing knees and elbows up the last yard or two of the shaft (which offered no foothold, but was fortunately narrow enough to be scaled by lateral pressure of legs and arms), and then fell exhausted and out of breath in the sweeter air of the chamber above.

Presently he passed through dark, familiar ways into a night of silver stars, with Venus in the arms of the young moon. Then life looked a good thing again, and the man's tongue was loosened, and he prayed to Allah for pardon and wept bitter tears as he crossed the lonely sand. The recovered treasure left his mind as Salim Subra filled it once again. So, with weak feet, he neared the spot where he had slain his friend, and his blood froze in his veins at sound of a jackal's howl from the crater of stones; but he steeled himself to the ordeal, and hastened onwards to drive the unclean beast from the dead. As he hurried across the little cup of sand, a pair of dark night scavengers turned with bristling backs and gleaming teeth at his intrusion. He saw the moonlight glimmer in their amber eyes; he heard their angry yelp and snarl; then, as he came on, they turned tail, and skulked into the darkness of the adjacent rocks. Thereupon Faraj sought, trembling, only to find that the silver mystery of the night brooded over an empty space. On the sand was a black patch of dry blood surrounded by the paw-marks of the beasts; that was all; and gazing further, the Arab saw that no concourse of men had borne the dead away, for the tell-tale sand must have revealed that story. Only one straggling and uncertain line, such as the feet of the drunken draw, appeared; and it led, with bend and break, backward to Dashur.

Salim Subra had surely come to life again and passed on his own legs homewards. For a moment Faraj sank down in a wordless prayer of thanksgiving to Allah; then he pressed forward with his remaining strength in



"HE SAW THE MOONLIGHT  
GLIMMER IN THEIR AMBER EYES."

mingled joy and fear. Now he rejoiced that murder was not written in the Book against him; now he feared at every shadow on the way that he had found his friend, fallen again, this time in reality a corpse.

His thought was to surrender himself to justice, as became one whom Allah had mercifully preserved from deadly sin; but he changed his mind, and, on reaching the village, determined just to visit the abode of Salim Subra and learn his fate, together with particulars of the hope of life remaining to him. Neither weeping nor wailing marked the lonely home of his friend. The place was silent under the night, but the beam of a candle glowed from the open window, and gazing through it, Faraj saw the man he had left for dead, lying peaceful, with open, living eyes, upon his couch. Beside him stood one skilled in the framework of men and in the herbs and medicaments proper to all its ills; bandages were about the sufferer's brow, and he lay awake and sensible. Then the new-comer entered, cried aloud, sank upon his knees beside the sufferer, and bent low until his head touched the ground.

#### IV.

FOR a fortnight Salim Subra lay between life and death; then the white angel had her

way, and he returned by slow degrees to health. Day and night did Faraj minister at the couch of the injured man, and then, when it was told him that Salim would not die, he too tottered on the verge of peril, and his brain was stricken with fever, in the wild ravings of which he uttered many mad words of an under-world wherein the incarnate gods of Egypt still dwelt and guarded the treasure of Nephron.

But in time it pleased Allah that each young man should come again to his full strength and powers of body and mind. They conversed together, as friends converse, and marvelled that no sign or token of black eyed Laylá had reached Salim whilst he lay at the door of death. The mystery was not long in solving, and when summer had come, and Salim and Faraj were mighty busy about some private concerns, which required many visits to high places in Cairo, it chanced that, on one occasion of passing through the bazaar, Faraj ran upon Laylá, and recognised her, and had some speech with her.

"It is true, then," he said, "that your father, old Nasim Birbâri, hath left Dashur and now abides in the city?"

"Aye," she answered. "I was ever my wont to be plain with thee, Faraj Tabit, and I will be now. A girl has but one life, and though I loved thee well enough, thou hadst little to give in exchange, and little to promise a wife. So, at my father's wise speech, I consented to wed with Salim."

"Then how comes it——"

"Hear me. We saw him not on the morn of the Mahmoud, and so went our way, counting to meet with him at the house of 'Aziz-ul-Hajj, his uncle. But he came not, though the good man made a feast, and spread for us ducks stuffed with pistachio nuts, sweetmeats scented with musk and attar, rice and honey, red wine and white. These things are dear to me, and I loved them; while old, wifeless 'Aziz, looking upon me, loved me, and—and——"

"No need to say more."

"A girl can only live her life once. Is it not so? That is why Salim passed from my

mind. Here was the fortune he promised at first hand. My husband, for we are wedded, is not passing rich, yet well-to-do and comfortable withal. When had you or Salim Subra set ducks stuffed with pistachio nuts before me?"

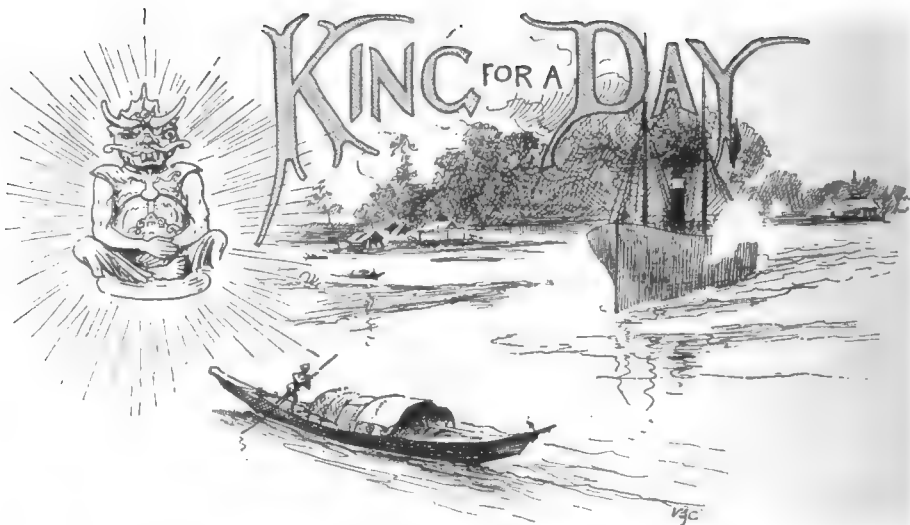
"Why, truly, 'Aziz-ul-Hajj holds some store of paltry trinkets and tin gods and stone scarabs, whose origin is hidden from the credulous that buy them; but consider, woman, the treasure of Nephron! Was that not worth while waiting a little for?"

She laughed.

"Poor children! Still grubbing in the dark for that! Give me the thing that is sure."

"Wretched, stone hearted fool!" he burst out. "Go to thy dotard, and thy roast ducks! Drink thy sour wine, and glory in thy pitiful prosperity. Allah has been merciful to two young men, and heaped a curse on the grey hairs of an old one. Begone to thy unhappy husband, false, lying daughter of Iblis; and tell him that Salim Subra and Faraj Tabit have come at the treasure of Nephron in very truth, that the world of Egypt will ring with a wonder before the new moon. Tell him that great news, evil one; and know thyself, for thy future reflection, that either of those whom thou put to shame before the people might now, if so he willed it, buy a hundred times over all the rubbish in thy husband's house. Thousands of pounds of yellow, English gold are ours, and we depart ere long from the shores of Egypt to the greater world beyond. One soul dwells within us, one love—that of each for the other animates us; and may God blacken our faces if ever again we trust our hearts in a woman's keeping, if ever again we suffer eyes or ears, or any sense of our bodies, to be conquered by a woman's wiles!"

So saying, and indeed prophesying somewhat vain things in the whirlwind of his anger, Faraj Tabit swept away; and Laylá, the wife of the curio merchant, felt her heart turned to gall as she watched him depart.



BY W. A. FRASER.



AS you walk up the many score of steps leading to the Golden Pagoda in Rangoon, and come out upon the cemented flat in front of the tapering spire itself, you will see a Burmese temple a little to the right. Among other gods rested there once a small alabaster figure of Buddha, stained yellow, and with a hideous dragon-head; but it is not there now. And because of that alabaster god, these things happened.

Sir Lemuel Jones, C.I.E., was Chief Commissioner of Burma. Lawrence Jones, captain of the "tramp" steamer, *Newcastle Maid*, was his brother. More than that, they were twins, as like as two drops of water. It was *kismet* that Sir Lemuel should rise to be Chief Commissioner, while it was Larry's own fault that he was only captain of a freighter. But they both enjoyed themselves, each after his kind.

One morning in November the *Newcastle Maid* glided up the Irawaddy and swung to moorings just off the main wharf at Rangoon. Larry had not seen his brother for years; and, for the matter of that, did not care if many more years passed before he saw him. Their paths ran at right angles. He was there for a cargo of rice, not to renew family ties.

It was because the chief engineer of the *Newcastle Maid* was a man after his own heart that he said, before going ashore: "I don't want to get into a gale here, for I've had a letter from the owners over that last break I made in Calcutta; if I come off

seas over, just lock me in the cabin, and don't let me out. No matter what I say, keep me there until I'm braced up."

Then the captain went ashore. "I want to see the Golden Pagoda," said he, as he chartered a gharry.

"Come quickly, I'm waiting," whispered the yellow image of Buddha, the alabaster god, in his ear. It was there, in the funny little temple all decked out with Chinese lanterns, and tinsel, and grotesque gods. Straight the influence led him to it—to the dragon-headed god.

Stealing was not one of Larry's vices, but what matters man's ways when the gods are running his life for him? It scorched his fingers when he touched it; and when it was in his pocket it scorched his mind. The demon of impulse took possession of the captain. "I must do something," and he thought of the usual routine—whisky. It held out no pleasing prospect. "Something else, something else; something worthy of Captain Jones," whispered the little god.

He took a drive out through the cantonments. As he bowled along in the old gharry a new experience came to him. Gentlemen lifted their hats; and ladies driving in their carriages smiled and bowed in the most gracious manner.

"I wonder if there's anything sticking to my face," thought Larry, and he passed his hand carefully over its surface; it seemed all right.

But still they kept it up—everybody he met; and one officer, galloping by on his pony, took a pull at the animal's head and





"IT WAS THERE, IN THE FUNNY LITTLE TEMPLE."

shouted, "Are you coming to the club to-night, sir?"

"No!" roared the captain; for he hadn't the faintest idea of going to a club without an invitation.

"They'll be awfully disappointed," came the echo of the officer's voice as the gharry opened up a gap between them.

"Very kind," muttered Larry; "but I fancy they'll get over it. Must have taken me for somebody else."

And the dragon grin on the face of the alabaster god in his pocket spread out until it was hideous to look upon. Larry didn't see this; he was busy staring open-mouthed at the image of himself sitting in a carriage just in front. The carriage was turning out of a compound, and blocked the road, so that his own driver was forced to stop. He recognised the other man. It was Sir Lemuel, his twin brother.

The recognition was mutual. The Commissioner bowed quite coldly as the captain called out, "How are you, Lemuel?"

Then the big Waler horses whipped the carriage down the road at a slashing gait, and Larry was left alone with The Thing in his pocket.

"So that's why they've been taking off their hats to me," he mused. "They take me for Sir Lemuel. Great time he must

have ruling these yellow niggers out here. I'd like to be in his shoes just for a day, to see how it feels to be King of Burma."

All the way back to the hotel he was thinking about it. Arrived there, he wrote a note addressed to the Chief Commissioner, and sent it off by a native. "That will bring him," he muttered; "he always was a bit afraid of me."

It was six o'clock when Sir Lemuel arrived in his carriage. There was a great scurrying about of servants, and no end of salaaming the "Lat" Sahib; for it was not often the Chief Commissioner honoured the hotel with his presence. He was shown to Captain Jones's room.

"Take a seat, Lem," said Captain Larry, cheerfully. "I wanted to see you, and thought you'd rather come here than receive me at Government House."

"Please be brief, then," said Sir Lemuel, in his most dignified manner; "I have to attend a dinner at the club to-night in honour of the return of our Judicial Commissioner."

"Oh, Sir Lemuel will be there in time for that," chuckled the captain. "But first, Lem, for the sake of old times, I want you to drink a glass of wine with me. You know we took a drink together pretty often the first year of our existence." Then he broke into a loud sailor laugh that irritated the Commissioner.

"While I don't approve of drinking to the extent you have carried it," said Sir Lemuel, with judicial severity, "still, I can't refuse a glass proffered by my brother."

"Your twin brother," broke in Larry; "of whom you've always been so fond, you know."

"I really must be going, so please tell me why you've sent for me." But when he had drunk the glass of wine, he gave up all idea of going anywhere but to sleep—for it was drugged.

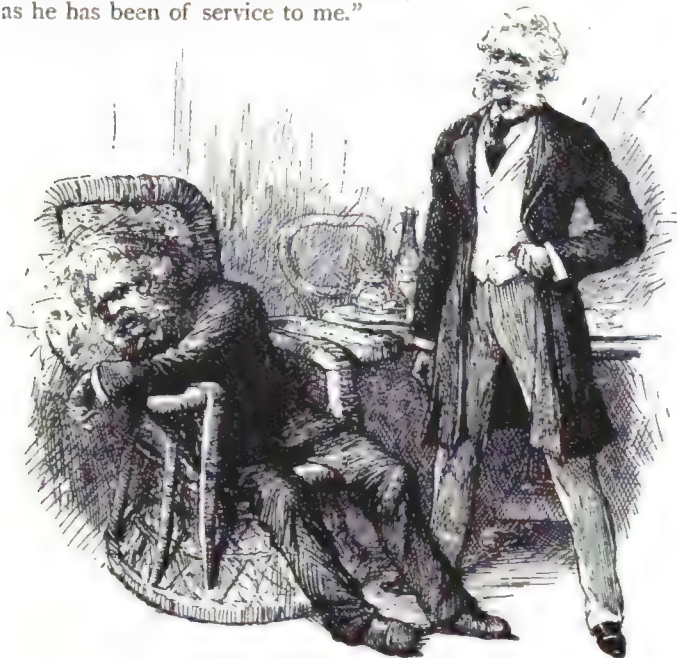
Then Captain Larry stripped his brother, peeled the august body of the Commissioner as one would strip a willow, and draped him in his own sailor outfit. "You're a groggy-looking captain," he said, as he tried to brace the figure up in a big chair; "you're a disgrace to the service. You'll have your papers taken away, first thing you know."

He had put the alabaster god on the table while he was making the transfer.

"This is all your doing," he said, addressing the figure.

When he had arrayed himself in the purple and fine linen of the Commissioner,

he emptied the contents of the bottle of wine through the window. Then he went below and spoke to the proprietor. "The captain up-stairs, who had an important communication to make to me, has become suddenly most completely intoxicated. Never saw a man get drunk so quick in my life. Can you have him sent off to his ship, so that he won't get in disgrace? It's my express wish that this should be done, as he has been of service to me."



"YOU'RE A DISGRACE TO THE SERVICE."

"All right, sir," exclaimed the hotel-keeper, touching his forehead with his forefinger in salute, "I will get Captain Davin, who is a great friend of his, to take him off right away."

"Most considerate man, the Chief Commissioner," remarked the Boniface, as the carriage rolled away.

The carriage swung in under a shed-like portico at the front of a big, straggling bungalow. The driver pulled up his horses; the two yaktail-bearing footmen, who had jumped down from their places behind as the carriage turned in off the road, ran hastily up, opening the door and lowering the steps for The Presence, the Lat Sahib, the Father of all Burmans. Only, Father and all as he was, none of his children served in the house, the captain noticed. All the servants were from India.

"Halloa! there's the ship's log," exclaimed the captain, looking at the big visitors' book

in the entrance. "Wonder where I've got to sign that. The ship musters a big crew," as he ran his eye down the long list of names.

"When does The Presence want the carriage?" asked a ponderous, much-liveried native servant, making a deep salaam.

The captain pulled out his watch—Sir Lemuel's watch. "It's a beauty," he mused, as his eyes fell on its rich yellow sides.

"Right away, mate—I mean bos'n—that is, tell him not to go away. Wonder what that fellow's proper title is on the muster?"

"Ah, you're to dine at the club to-night, Sir Lemuel," a cheery English voice said, as a young man came out of a room on the right.

"I know that," angrily answered Larry. "I don't have to be told my business."

"Certainly, Sir Lemuel; but you asked me to jog your memory, as you are so apt to forget these things, you know."

"Quite right, quite right," answered the captain. "If you catch me forgetting anything else, just hold out a signal—that is, tip me the wink, will you?"

"We've had a telegram

from Lady Jones, Sir Lemuel——"

The cold perspiration stood out on the captain's forehead. This was something he had forgotten all about. A bachelor himself, it had never occurred to him that Sir Lemuel was probably married and that he would have to face the wife.

"Where is she? When is she coming back?" he gasped.

"Oh, Sir Lemuel, it was only to say that she had arrived safely in Prome."

"Thank God for that!" exclaimed the captain, with a rare burst of reverence.

The private secretary looked rather astonished. Sir Lemuel had always been a very devoted husband, but not the sort of man to give way to an expression of strong feeling simply because his wife had arrived at the end of her journey.

"Do you happen to remember what she said about coming back?" he asked of the wondering secretary.

"No, Sir Lemuel; but she'll probably remain till her sister is out of danger—a couple of weeks, perhaps."

"Of course, of course," said the captain. "Thank the Lord!—I mean I'm so glad that she's had a safe voyage," he corrected himself, heaving a great sigh of relief. "That's one rock out of the channel," he muttered.

A bearer was waiting patiently for him to go and change his dress. The captain whistled softly to himself when he saw the dress suit all laid out and everything in perfect order for a "quick change," as he called it. As he finished dressing, the "bos'n," he of the gorgeous livery, appeared, announcing, "Johnson Sahib, sir."

"Who?" queried Captain Larry.

"Sec'tary Sahib, sir."

"Oh, that's my private secretary," he thought.

"I've brought the speech, Sir Lemuel," said the young man, as he entered. "You'll hardly have time to go through it before we start."

The captain slipped the speech and the little alabaster god in his pocket, and they were soon bowling along to the official dinner. "Look here, Johnson," he said, "I think fever or something's working on me. I can't remember men's faces, and get their names all mixed up. I wouldn't go to this dinner to-night if I hadn't promised to. I ought to stay aboard the ship—I mean, I ought to stay at home. Now, I want you to help me through, and if it goes off all right, I'll double your salary next month. Safe to promise that," he muttered to himself. "Let Lem attend to it."

At the club, as the captain entered, the band struck up "God Save the Queen."

"By jingo, we're late!" he said; "the show's over."

"He *has* got fever or sun, sure," thought his companion. "Oh, no, Sir Lemuel; they're waiting for you to sit down to dinner. There's Mr. Barnes, the Judicial Commissioner, talking to Colonel Short, sir," added the secretary, pointing to a tall, clerical-looking gentleman. "He's looking very much cut up over the loss of his wife."

"Wife dead, must remember that," thought Larry.

Just then the Judicial Commissioner caught sight of the captain, and hastened forward to greet him.

"How do you do, dear Sir Lemuel? I called this afternoon. So sorry to find that Lady Jones was away. You must find

it very lonely, Sir Lemuel; I understand this is the first time you have been separated during the many years of your married life."

"Yes, I shall miss the little woman. That great barracks is not the same without her sweet little face about."

"That's a pretty tall order," ejaculated a young officer to a friend. And it was, considering that Lady Jones was an Amazonian type of woman, 5ft. 10in., much given to running the whole State, and known as the "Ironclad." But Larry didn't know that, and had to say something.

"Dear Lady Jones," sighed the Judicial Commissioner, pathetically. "I suppose she returns almost immediately?"

"The Lord forbid—at least, not for a few days. I want her to enjoy herself while she's away. You will feel the loss of your wife, Mr. Barnes, even more than I; for, of course, she will *never* come back to you."

To say that general consternation followed this venture of the captain's is drawing it very mild indeed, for the J. C.'s wife was not dead at all, but had wandered far away with a lieutenant in a Madras regiment.

"It's the Ironclad put him up to that. She was always down on the J. C. for marrying a girl half his age," said an assistant Deputy Commissioner to a man standing beside him.

The secretary was tugging energetically at the captain's coat-tails. "What is it, Johnson?" he asked, suddenly realizing the tug.

"Dinner is on, sir."

"Rare streak of humour the chief is developing," said Captain Lushton, with a laugh. "Fancy he's rubbing it into Barnes on account of that appeal case."

Owing to the indisposition of the Chief Commissioner, by special arrangement the secretary sat at his left, which was rather fortunate; for, by the time dinner was over, the captain had looked upon the wine and seen that it was good—had looked several times. What with the worry of keeping his glass empty, and answering, with more or less relevance, respectful questions addressed to him from different parts of the table, he pretty well forgot all about the speech lying in his lap. Once or twice he looked at it, but the approaches to the facts were so ambiguous, and veiled so carefully under such expressions as, "It is deemed expedient under existing circumstances," etc., that he got very little good from it. One or two facts he gleaned, however; that, owing to the extraordinary exertion of the Judicial Commis-





"THE SECRETARY WAS TUGGING AT THE CAPTAIN'S COAT-TAILS."

sioner, all the dacoits had either been hung, transported to the Andamans, or turned from their evil course and made into peaceable tillers of the soil; their two-handed *dah* had been dubbed up, more or less, into a plough-share.

"Glad of that," thought the captain. "Hate those beastly dacoits. They're like mutineers on shipboard. The padre-like lawyer must be a good one."

Another point that loomed up on his sailor vision like the gleam of a lighthouse was a reference to a petition calling attention to the prevalence of crime connected with sailors during the shipping season, and asking for the establishment of a separate police-court, with a special magistrate, to try these cases.

"Shall we have the honour of your presence at the races to-morrow?" pleasantly asked a small, withy man, four seats down the table.

The captain was caught unawares, and blurted out, "Where are they?"

"On the race-course, sir."

The answer was a simple, straightforward one, but, nevertheless, it made everybody laugh.

"I thought they were on the moon," said the captain, in a nettled tone.

A man doesn't laugh at a Chief Commissioner's joke, as a rule, because it's funny,

but the mirth that followed this was genuine enough.

"Sir Lemuel is coming out," said Captain Lushton. "Pity the Iron-clad wouldn't go away every week."

In the natural order of things, Sir Lemuel had to respond to the toast of "The Queen." Now, the secretary had very carefully and elaborately prepared the Chief Commissioner's speech for this occasion. Sir Lemuel had conscientiously "mugged" it up, and if he had not at that moment been a prisoner on

board the *Newcastle Maid*, would have delivered it with a pompous sincerity which would have added to his laurels as a deep thinker and brilliant speaker. But the captain of a tramp steamer, with a mixed cargo of sherry, hock, and dry Monopole in his stomach, and a mischief-working alabaster god in his pocket, is not exactly the proper person to deliver a statistical, semi-official after-dinner speech.

When the captain rose to his feet, the secretary whispered in his ear: "For Heaven's sake, don't say anything about the Judicial's wife. Talk about dacoits"; but the speech, so beautifully written, so lucid in its meaning, and so complicated in its detail, became a waving sea of foam. From out the billowy waste of this indefinite mass there loomed only the tall figure of the cadaverous J. C.; and attached to it, as a tangible something, the fact that he had lost his wife and settled the dacoits.

It was glorious, this getting up before two strings of more or less bald-headed officials to tell them how the State ought to be run—the ship steered, as it were. "Gentlemen," he began, starting off bravely enough, "we are pleased to have among us once more our fellow-skipper, the Judicial Commissioner."

"The old buck's got a rare streak of humour on to-night," whispered Lushton.

"His jovial face adds to the harmony of the occasion. I will not allude to his late loss, as we all know how deeply he feels it."

"Gad! but he's rubbing it in," said Lushton.

"I repeat, we are glad to have him among

of another assistant magistrate's court to try these cases, presided over by a man more or less familiar with the shipping interests. Now, that's the only sensible thing I ever heard talked of in this heathen land. Set a thief to catch a thief, I say. Put the ship in charge of a sailor himself — of a captain. None of your landlubbers."

His theme was carrying him away; he was on deck again. But the others thought it was only his humour; the strange, unaccountable humour that had taken possession of him since the Ironclad had let go her hold.

"Now, I know of a most worthy captain," he continued, "who would fill this billet with honour to himself and profit to the Judicial. His name is Captain Jones—a namesake of my own, I may say —of the *Newcastle Maid*,

2,000 tons register. I've known him ever since he was a babe, and the sailors won't fool him, I can tell you. I'd a talk with him this evening down at the hotel, and he's just the man for the job. I'd sign the papers appointing him to-morrow if they were put before me. He ought to have a good salary, though," he said, as he sat down, rather abruptly, some of them thought.

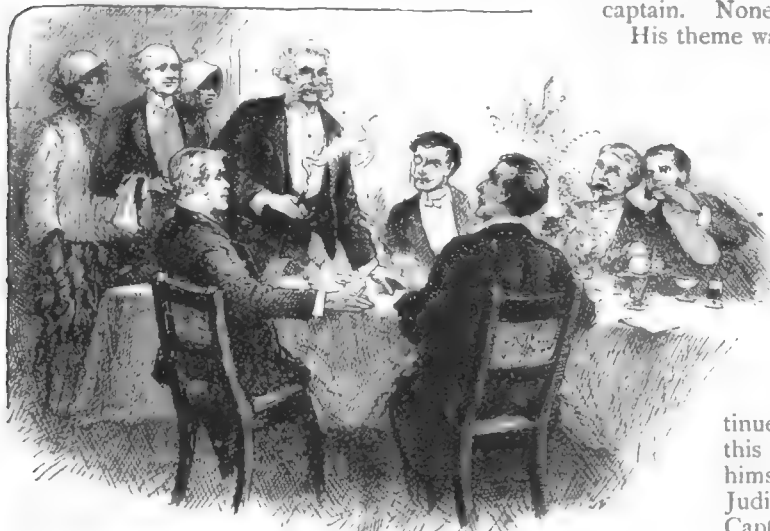
The secretary sighed as he shoved in his pocket the written speech, which the captain had allowed to slip to the floor. "It'll do for another time, I suppose," he said, wearily, "when he gets over this infernal touch of sun or Burma head."

People in India get used to that sort of thing happening — of their older officials saying startling things sometimes. That's what the fifty-five years' service is for—to prevent it. The other speeches did not appeal to Captain Larry much, nor, for the matter of that, to the others either. He had certainly made the hit of the evening.

"It's great, this," he said, bucolically, to the secretary, as they drove home.

"What, sir?"

"Why, making speeches, and driving home in your own carriage. I hate going aboard ship in a jiggledy sampan at night. I'll have a



"A RARE STREAK OF HUMOUR."

us once again: My secretary assures me that there's not a single dacoit left alive in the province. There's nothing like putting these rebellious chaps down. I had a mutiny myself once, on board *The Kangaroo*. I shot the ringleaders, and made every mother's son of the rest of them walk the plank. So I'm proud of the good work the Judicial has done in this respect."

Now, it had been a source of irritating regret to every Deputy Commissioner in the service, that when he had caught a dacoit red-handed, convicted and sentenced him to be hanged, and sent the ruling up to the Judicial for confirmation, he had been promptly sat on officially, and the prisoner either pardoned or let off with a light sentence. Consequently these little pleasantries of the captain were looked upon as satire.

"There is one other little matter I wish to speak about," continued the captain, in the most natural manner possible, "and that is, the prevalence of what we might call 'sailor crimes' in Rangoon." He told in the most graphic manner of the importance of the shipping interests, for he was right at home on that subject, and wound up by saying: "I've been presented with a largely signed petition, praying for the establishment

string of wharves put all along the front there, so that ships won't have to load at their moorings. Just put me in mind of that to-morrow."

Next day there was considerable diversion on the *Newcastle Maid*. "The old man's got the D. T.'s," the chief engineer told the first officer. "I locked him in his cabin last night when they brought him off, and he's banging things about there in great shape. Swears he's the ruler of Burma and Sir Gimnel Somebody. I won't let him out till he gets all right again, for he'd go up to the agents with this cock-and-bull story. They'd cable home to the owners, and he'd be taken out of the ship sure."

That's why Sir Lemuel tarried for a day on the *Newcastle Maid*. Nobody would go near him but the chief engineer, who handed him meat and drink through a port-hole and laughed soothingly at his fancy tales.

After *chota hazre* next morning, the secretary brought to Captain Larry a large basket of official papers for his perusal and signature. That was Sir Lemuel's time for work. His motto was, business first, and afterwards more business. Each paper was carefully contained in a cardboard holder secured by red tape.

"The log, eh, mate?" said Larry, when the secretary brought them into his room. "It looks ship-shape, too."

"This file, sir, is the case of Deputy Commissioner Grant, 1st Grade, of Bungaloo. He has memorialized the Government that Coatsworth, 2nd Grade, has been appointed over his head to the Commissionership of Bhang. He's senior to Coatsworth, you know, sir, in the service."

"Well, why has Coatsworth been made first mate then?"

"Grant's afraid it's because he offended you, sir, went you went to Bungaloo. He received you in a *jahran* coat, you remember, and you were awfully angry about it."

"Oh, I was, was I? Just shows what an ass Sir Lemuel can be sometimes. Make Grant a Commissioner at once, and I'll sign the papers."

"But there's no Commissionership open, sir, unless you set back Coatsworth."

"Well, I'll set him back. I'll discharge him from the service."

What else have you got there? What's that bundle on the deck?"

"They're native petitions, sir."

Larry took up one. It began with an Oriental profusion of gracious titles bestowed upon the Commissioner, and went into business by stating that the writer, Baboo Sen's wife, had got two children, "by the grace of God and the kind favour of Sir Lemuel, the Father of all Burmans." And the long petition was all to the end that Baboo Sen might have a month's leave of absence.

Larry chuckled, for he did not understand the complex nature of a Baboo's English. The next petition gave him much food for thought; it made his head ache. The English was like logarithms. "Here," he said to the secretary, "you fix these petitions up later; I'm not used to them."

He straightened out the rest of the official business in short order. Judgments that would have taken the wind out of Solomon's sails, he delivered with a rapidity that made the secretary's head swim. They were not all according to the code, and would probably not stand if sent up to the Privy Council. At any rate, they would give Sir Lemuel much patient undoing when he came



"BANGING THINGS ABOUT."



into his own again. The secretary unlocked the official seal, and worked it, while the captain limited his signature to "L. Jones."

"That's not forgery," he mused; "it means 'Larry Jones.'"

"The Chief's hand is pretty shaky this morning," thought the secretary; for the signature was not much like the careful, clerkly hand that he was accustomed to see.

Sir Lemuel's wine had been a standing reproach to Government House. A dinner that either turned a man into a teetotaler or a dyspeptic; and at *tiffin*, when the captain broached a bottle of it, he set his glass down with a roar.

"He's brought me the vinegar," he exclaimed, "or the coal oil. Is there no better wine in the house than this?" he asked the butler; and when told there wasn't, he insisted upon the secretary writing out an order at once for fifty dozen Pommery. "Have it back in time for dinner, sure! I'll leave some for Lem, too; this stuff isn't good for his blood," he said to himself, grimly.

"I'm glad this race meet is on while I'm king," he thought, as he drove down after *tiffin*, taking his secretary with him. "They say the Prince of Wales always gets the straight tip, and I'll be sure to be put on to something good."

And he was. Captain Lushton told him that his mare Nettie was sure to win the Rangoon Plate, forgetting to mention that he himself had backed Tomboy for the same race.

"Must have wrenched a leg," Lushton assured Larry when Nettie came in absolutely last.

It was really wonderful how many "good things" he got on to that did run last, or thereabouts. It may have been the little alabaster Buddha in his pocket that brought him the bad luck; but as the secretary wrote "I O U's" for all the bets he made, and as Sir Lemuel would be into his own again before settling day, and would have to pay up, it did not really matter to the captain.

The regiment was so pleased with Sir Lemuel's contributions that the best they had in their marquee was none too good for him. The ladies found him an equally ready mark. Mrs. Leyburn was pretty, and had fish to fry. "I must do a little missionary work while the Ironclad's away," she thought.

Her mission was to instal her husband in the position of port officer. That came out later—came out at the ball that night. The captain assured her that he would attend.

There is always a sort of Donnybrook

Derby at the end of a race day in Rangoon. Ponies are gently sequestered from their more or less willing owners, and handed over minus their saddles, to sailors, who pilot them erratically around the course for a contributed prize. When the captain saw the hat going around for the prize money, he ordered the secretary to write out a "chit" for 200 rupees. "Give them something worth while, poor chaps," he said.

"And to think that the Ironclad has kept this bottled up so long," muttered Lushton.

"I always said you had a good heart," Mrs. Leyburn whispered to the captain. "If people would only let you show it," she added, maliciously; meaning, of course, Lady Jones.

The Chief Commissioner was easily the most popular man in Burma that night. It was with difficulty the blue-jackets could be kept from carrying him home on their shoulders. "I hope Lem is looking after the cargo all right," murmured the captain, as he drove home to dinner. "I seem to be getting along nicely. Lucky the old cat's away."

The captain danced the opening quadrille at the ball with the wife of the Financial Commissioner, and bar a little enthusiastic rolling engendered of his sea life, and a couple of torn trails as they swept a little too close, he managed it pretty well. The secretary had piloted him that far. Then Mrs. Leyburn swooped down upon him.

There is an adornment indigenous to every ball-room in the East, known as the *kala jagah*: it may be a conservatory or a bay window. A quiet seat among the crotons, with the drowsy drone of the waltz flitting in and out among the leaves, is just the place to work a man.

I'm telling you this now; but Mrs. Leyburn knew it long ago: moons before Captain Larry opened the ball with the Financial Commissioner's wife. Not that Mrs. Leyburn was the only woman with a mission. Official life in India is full of them; only, she had the start—that was all.

"It's scandalous," another missionary said to Captain Lushton. "They've been in there an hour—they've sat out three dances. I'm sorry for poor dear Lady Jones."

Among the crotons the missionary-in-the-field was saying: "I'm sure Jack ordered the launch to meet you at the steamer that time, Sir Lemuel. He knows you were frightfully angry about it, and has felt it terribly. He's simply afraid to ask you for the billet of port officer; and that horrible man who is acting

officer now will get it, and poor Jack won't be able to send me up to Darjeeling next hot weather. And you'll be going for a month again next season, Sir Lemuel, won't you?"

Now, as it happened, the captain had had a row with the acting port officer coming up the river; so it was just in his mitt, as he expressed it. "I'll arrange it for Jack to-morrow," he said; "never fear, little woman."



"I'LL ARRANGE IT FOR JACK TO-MORROW," HE SAID."

("He spoke of you as Jack," she told Leyburn later on, "and it's all right, love. Lucky the Ironclad was away.")

A lady approaching from the ball-room heard a little rustle among the plants, pushed eagerly forward, and stood before them. Another missionary had entered the field. "I beg pardon, Sir Lemuel," and she disappeared.

"Perfectly scandalous!" she said, as she met Lushton. "Someone ought to advise dear Lady Jones of that designing creature's behaviour."

"For Cupid's sake, don't," ejaculated Lushton, fervently. "Let the old boy have his fling. He doesn't get out often."

"I've no intention of doing so myself," said his companion, with asperity.

But all the same a telegram went that night to Lady Jones at Prome, which bore good fruit next day, and much of it.

When they emerged from the crotons, Mrs. Leyburn was triumphant. The captain was more or less pleased with things as they were. "Jack will probably crack Lem's

head when he doesn't get his appointment," he thought.

The band was playing a waltz, and he and Mrs. Leyburn mingled with the swinging figures. As they rounded a couple that steered across the captain's course, his coat-tails flew out a little too horizontally, and the yellow-faced alabaster god rolled on the floor. It spun around like a top for a few times,

and then sat bolt upright, grinning with hideous familiarity at the astonished dancers. Not that many were dancing now, for a wondering crowd commenced to collect about the captain and the grotesque little Buddha. The lady-who-had-seen took in the situation in an instant; for jealousy acts like new wine on the intellect. She darted forward, picked up the obese little god, and, with a sweet smile on her gentle face, proffered it to the captain's companion, with the remark, "I think you've dropped one of your children's toys."

Captain Larry was speechless; he was like a hamstrung elephant, and as helpless.

A private secretary is a most useful adjunct to a Chief Commissioner, but a private secretary with brains is a jewel.

So when Johnson stepped quickly forward and said, "Excuse me, madam, but that figure belongs to me; I dropped it," the captain felt as though a life-line had been thrown to him.

The secretary put the Buddha in his pocket; and it really appeared as though from that moment the captain's luck departed. He slipped away early from the ball; it seemed, somehow, as though the fun had gone out of the thing. He began to have misgivings as to the likelihood of the chief engineer keeping his brother shut up much longer. "I'll get out of this in the morning," he said, as he turned into bed. "I've had enough of it. I'll scuttle the ship and clear out."

This virtuous intention would have been easy of accomplishment, comparatively, if he had not slept until ten o'clock. When he arose, the secretary came to him with a troubled face. "There's a telegram from Lady Jones, Sir Lemuel, asking for the carriage to meet her at the station, and I've sent it. She's chartered a special train, and we expect her any moment."

"Great Scot! I'm lost!" moaned the captain. "I must get out of this. Help me dress quickly, that's a good fellow."

An official accosted him as he came out of his room. "I want to see you, Sir Lemuel."

"Is that your tom-tom at the door?" answered the captain, quite irrelevantly.

"Yes, Sir Lemuel."

"Well, just wait here for a few minutes. I've got to meet Lady Jones, and I'm late."

Jumping into the cart, he drove off at a furious clip. Fate, in the shape of the Ironclad, swooped down upon him at the very gate. He met Lady Jones face to face.

"Stop!" she cried, excitedly. "Where are you going, Sir Lemuel?"

"I'm not Sir Lemuel," roared back the disappointed captain.

"Nice exhibition you're making of yourself—Chief Commissioner of Burma."

"I'm not the Commissioner of Burma. I'm not your Sir Lemuel," he answered, anxious to get away at any cost.

"The man is mad. The next thing you'll deny that I'm your wife."

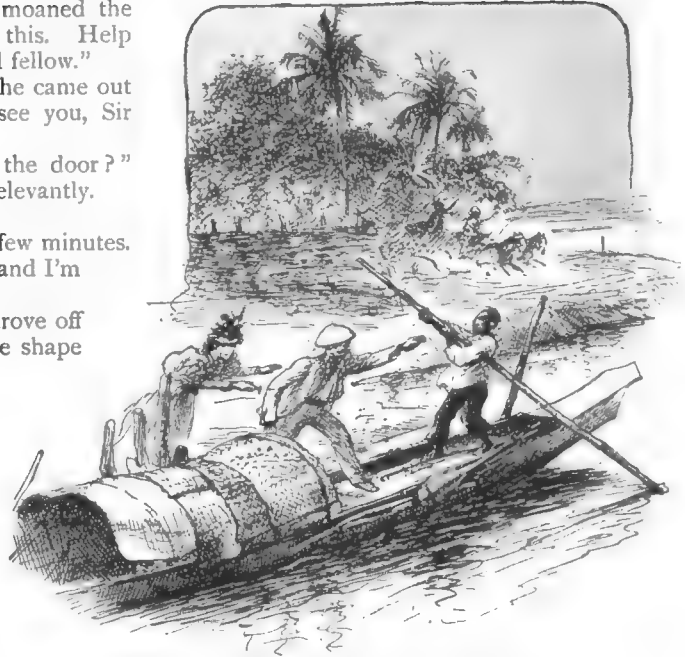
"Neither are you!" roared the enraged captain, and away he sped.

Lady Jones followed. It was a procession; the red spokes of the tom-tom twinkling in and out the bright patches of sunlight as it whirled along between the big banyan trees; and behind, the carriage, Lady Jones sitting bolt upright with set lips. The captain reached the wharf first. He was down the steps and into a sampan like a shot.

It was the only sampan there. The carriage dashed up at that instant. There was no other boat; there was nothing for it but to wait.

"Come, Lem, get into these duds and clear out," cried the captain, as he burst into his cabin.

"You villain! I'll have you sent to the Andamans for this," exclaimed the prisoner.



"HE WAS INTO A SAMPAN LIKE A SHOT!"

"Quick! Your wife's waiting on the dock," said Larry.

That had the desired effect; Sir Lemuel became as a child that had played truant.

"What have you done, Larry?" he cried, pathetically. "You've ruined me."

"No, I've done you good. And I've left you some decent wine at the house. Get ashore before she comes off."

"There's no help for it," said Sir Lemuel. "There are your orders to proceed to Calcutta to load; your beastly chief engineer insisted on shoving them in to me."

"Don't 'my love' me!" said the Ironclad, when Sir Lemuel climbed penitently into the carriage. "An hour ago you denied that I was your wife."

And so they drove off, the *syce* taking the tom-tom back to its owner. It took Sir Lemuel days and days to straighten out the empire after the rule of the man who had been "King for a day."



**L**T is very hard, when you have been accustomed to go to the seaside every summer ever since you were quite little, to be made to stay in London just because an aunt and an uncle choose to want to come and stay at your house to see the Royal Academy and go to the summer sales.

Selim and Thomasina felt that it was very hard indeed. And aunt and uncle were not the nice kind, either. If it had been Aunt Emma, who dressed dolls and told fairy-tales—or Uncle Reggie, who took you to the Crystal Palace, and gave you five bob at a time, and never even asked what you spent it on, it would have been different. But it was Uncle Thomas and Aunt Selina.

Aunt Selina was all beady, and sat bolt upright, and told you to mind what you were told, and Selim had been named after her—as near as they could get. And Uncle Thomas was the one Thomasina had been named after: he was deaf, and he always told you what the moral of everything was, and the housemaid said he was “near.”

“I know he is, worse luck,” said Thomasina.

“I mean, miss,” explained the housemaid, “he’s none too free with his chink.”

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Selim groaned. “He never gave me but a shilling in his life,” said he, “and that turned out to be bad when I tried to change it at the ginger-beer shop.”

The children could not understand why this aunt and uncle were allowed to interfere with everything as they did: and they quite made up their minds that when they were grown up they would never allow an aunt or an uncle to cross their doorsteps. They never thought—poor, dear little things—that some day they would grow up to be aunts and uncles in their turn, or, at least, one of each.

It was very hot in London that year: the pavement was like hot pie, and the asphalt was like hot pudding, and there was a curious wind that collected dust and straw and dirty paper, and then got tired of its collection, and threw it away in respectable people’s areas and front gardens. The blind in the nursery had never been fixed up since the day when the children took it down to make a drop-scene for a play they were going to write and never did. So the hot afternoon sun came burning in through the window, and the children got hotter and hotter, and crosser and crosser, till at last Selim slapped Thomasina’s arms till she cried, and Thomasina kicked Selim’s legs till he screamed.

Then they sat down in different corners of the nursery and cried, and called each other names, and said they wished they were dead. This is very naughty indeed, as, of course, you know; but you must remember how hot it was.

When they had called each other all the names they could think of, Thomasina said, suddenly: "All right, Silly" (that was Selim's pet name)—"cheer up."

"It's too hot to cheer up," said Selim, gloomily.

"We've been very naughty," said Thomasina, rubbing her eyes with the paint rag, "but it's all the heat. I heard Aunt Selina telling mother the weather wore her nerves to fiddle-strings. That just meant she was cross."

"Then it's not *our* fault," said Selim. "People say be good and you'll be happy. Uncle Reggy says, 'Be happy, and perhaps you'll be good.' I could be good if I was happy."

"So could I," said Thomasina.

"What *would* make you happy?" said a thick, wheezy voice from the toy cupboard, and out rolled the big green and red india-rubber ball that Aunt Emma had sent them last week. They had not played with it much, because the garden was so hot and sunny—and when they wanted to play with it in the street, on the shady side, Aunt Selina had said it was not like respectable children, so they weren't allowed.

Now the Ball rolled out very slowly—and the bright light on its new paint seemed to make it wink at them. You will think that they were surprised to hear a Ball speak. Not at all. As you grow up, and more and more strange things happen to you, you will find that the more astonishing a thing is the less it surprises you. (I wonder why this is. Think it over, and write and tell me what you think.)

Selim stood up, and said, "Halloa"; but that was only out of politeness. Thomasina answered the Ball's question.

"We want to be at the seaside—and no aunts—and none of the things we don't like—and no uncles, of course," she said.

"Well," said the Ball, "if you think you can be good, why not set me bouncing?"

"We're not allowed in here," said Thomasina, "because of the crinkly ornaments people give me on my birthdays."

"Well, the street then," said the Ball; "the nice shady side."

"It's not like respectable children," said Selim, sadly.

The Ball laughed. If you have never heard an india-rubber ball laugh you won't understand. It's the sort of quicker, quicker, quicker, softer, softer, softer chuckle of a bounce that it gives when it's settling down when you're tired of bouncing it.

"The garden, then," it said.

"I don't mind, if you'll go on talking," said Selim, kindly.

So they took the Ball down into the garden and began to bounce it in the sun, on the dry, yellowy grass of the lawn.

"Come on," said the Ball. "You do like me!"

"What?" said the children.

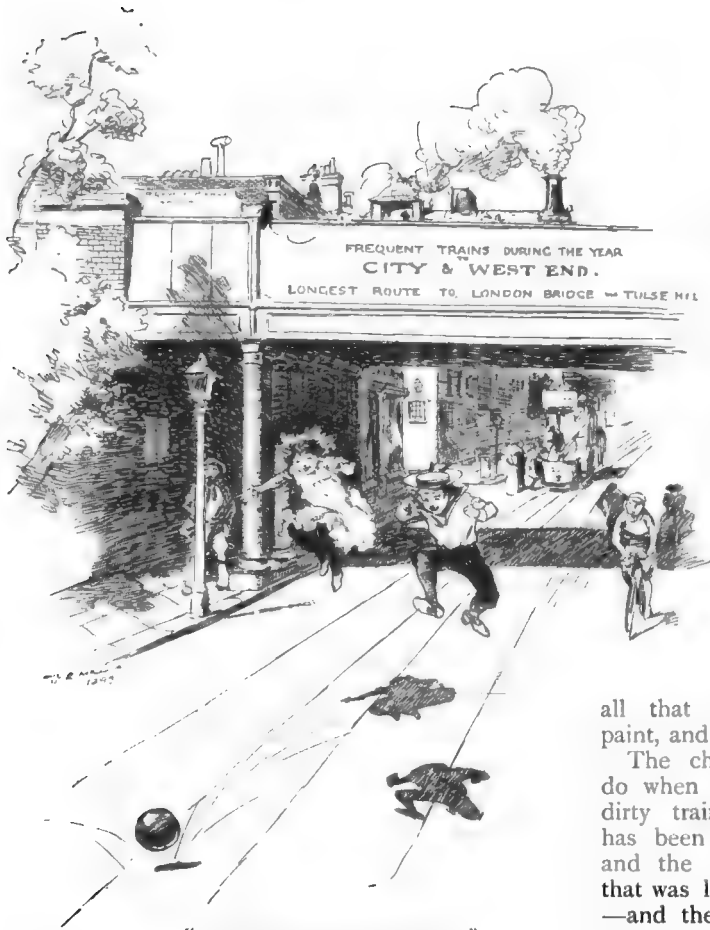
"Why, do like I do—bounce!" said the Ball. "That's right—higher, higher, higher!"

For then and there the two children had begun bouncing as if their feet were india-rubber balls, and you have no idea what a delicious sensation that gives you.

"Higher, higher," cried the green and red ball, bouncing excitedly. "Now, follow me, higher, higher." And off it bounced down the blackened gravel of the path, and the children bounced after it, shrieking with delight at the new feeling. They bounced over the wall—all three of them—and the children looked back just in time to see Uncle Thomas tapping at the window, and saying, "Don't."

You have not the least idea how glorious it is to feel full of bouncibleness; so that, instead of dragging one foot after the other, as you do when you feel tired or naughty, you bounce along, and every time your feet touch the ground you bounce higher, and all without taking any trouble or tiring yourself. You have perhaps heard of the Greek gentleman who got new strength every time he fell down. His name was Antæos, and I believe he was an india-rubber ball, green on one side where he touched the earth, and red on the other where he felt the sun. But enough of classical research.

Thomasina and Selim bounced away, following the Bouncible Ball. They went over fences and walls, and through parched, dry gardens and burning-hot streets; they passed the region where fields of cabbages and rows of yellow brick cottages mark the division between London and the suburbs. They bounced through the suburbs, dusty and neat, with geraniums in the front gardens, and all the blinds pulled half-way down; and then the lamp-posts in the road got fewer and fewer, and the fields got greener and the hedges thicker—it was real, true country—with lanes instead of roads; and



"FOLLOWING THE BOUNCIBLE BALL."

down the lanes the green and red Ball went bouncing, bouncing, bouncing and the children after it. Thomasina, in her white, starched frock, very prickly round the neck, and Selim, in his everyday sailor-suit, a little tight under the arms. His Sunday one was a size larger. No one seemed to notice them, but they noticed and pitied the children who were being "taken for a walk" in the gritty suburban roads.

"Where are we going?" they asked the Ball, and it answered, with a sparkling green and red smile:—

"To the most delightful place in the world."

"What's it called?" asked Selim.

"It's called Whereyouwantogoto," the Ball answered, and on they went. It was a wonderful journey—up and down, looking through the hedges and over them, looking in at the doors of cottages, and then in at the

top windows, up, and down—bounce—bounce—bounce.

And at last they came to the sea. And the Bouncible Ball said, "Here you are! Now be good, for there's nothing here but the things that make people happy." And with that he curled himself up like a ball in the shadow of a wet sea-weedy rock, and went to sleep, for he was tired out with his long journey. The children stopped bouncing, and looked about them.

"Oh, Tommy!" said Selim.

"Oh, Silly!" said Thomasina. And well they might! In the place to which the Ball had brought them was

all that your fancy can possibly paint, and a great deal more beside.

The children feel exactly as you do when you've had the long, hot, dirty train journey—and everyone has been so cross about the boxes and the little brown portmanteau that was left behind at the junction—and then when you get to your lodgings you are told that you may run down and have a look at the

sea if you're back by tea-time, and mother and nurse will unpack.

Only Thomasina and her brother had not had a tiresome journey—and there were no nasty, stuffy lodgings for them, and no tea, with oily butter and a new pot of marmalade.

"There's silver-sand," said she—"miles of it."

"And rocks," said he.

"And cliffs."

"And caves in the cliffs."

"And how cool it is," said Thomasina.

"And yet it's nice and warm too," said Selim.

"And what shells!"

"And seaweed."

"And the downs behind!"

"And trees in the distance!"

"And here's a dog, to go after sticks. Here, Rover, Rover."

A big black dog answered at once to the



name, because he was a retriever, and they are all called Rover.

"And spades!" said the girl.

"And pails!" said the boy.

"And what pretty sea-poppies," said the girl.

"And a basket—and grub in it!" said the boy. So they sat down and had lunch.

It was a lovely lunch. Lobsters and ice-creams (strawberry and pine-apple), and toffee and hot buttered toast and ginger-beer. They ate and ate, and thought of the aunt and uncle at home, and the minced veal and sago pudding, and they were very happy indeed.

Just as they were finishing their lunch they saw a swirling, swishing, splashing commotion in the green sea a little way off, and they tore off their clothes and rushed into the water to see what it was. It was a seal. He was very kind and convenient. He showed them how to swim and dive.



"'THANK YOU VERY MUCH,' THEY SAID. 'YOU ARE KIND.'"

"But won't it make us ill to bathe so soon after meals? Isn't it wrong?" asked Thomasina.

"Not at all," said the seal. "Nothing is wrong here—as long as you're good. Let me teach you water-leapfrog—a most glorious game, so cool, yet so exciting. You try it."

At last the seal said: "I suppose you wear man-clothes. They're very inconvenient. My two eldest have just outgrown their coats. If you'll accept them——"

And it dived, and came up with two

golden sealskin coats over its arm, and the children put them on.

"Thank you very much," they said. "You are kind."

I am almost sure that it has never been your luck to wear a fur coat that fitted you like a skin, and that could not be spoiled with sand or water, or jam, or bread and milk, or any of the things with which you mess up the nice new clothes your kind relations buy for you. But if you like, you may try to imagine how jolly the little coats were.

Thomasina and Selim played all day on the beach, and when they were tired they went into a cave, and found supper—salmon and cucumber, and welsh-rabbit and lemonade—and then they went to bed in a great heap of straw and grass and fern and dead leaves, and all the delightful things you have often wished to sleep in. Only you have never been allowed to.

In the morning there were plum-pudding for breakfast, and roast duck and lemon jelly, and the day passed like a happy dream, only broken by surprising and delightful meals. The Ball woke up and showed them how to play water-polo; and they bounced him on the sand, with shrieks of joy and pleasure. You know, a Ball likes to be bounced by people

he is fond of—it is like slapping a friend on the shoulder.

There were no houses in "Whereyou-wantogoto," and no bathing machines or bands, no nursemaids or policemen or aunts or uncles. You could do exactly what you liked as long as you were good.

"What will happen if we're naughty?" Selim asked. The Ball looked very grave, and answered:—

"I must not tell you; and I very strongly advise you not to try to find out."

"We won't—indeed, we won't," said they, and went off to play rounders with the rabbits on the downs—who were friendly fellows, and very keen on the game.

On the third evening Thomasina was

rather silent, and the Ball said: "What's the matter, girl-bouncer? Out with it."

So she said: "I was wondering how mother is, and whether she has one of her bad headaches."

The Ball said, "Good little girl! Come with me and I'll show you something."

He bounced away, and they followed him, and he flopped into a rocky pool, frightening the limpets and sea-anemones dreadfully, though he did not mean to.

"Now look," he called, from under the water—and the children looked, and the pool was like a looking-glass, only it was not their own faces they saw in it.

They saw the drawing-room at home, and father and mother, who were both quite well, only they looked tired—and the aunt and uncle were there—and Uncle Thomas was saying: "What a blessing those children are away."

"Then they know where we are?" said Selim to the Ball.

"They think they know," said the Ball—"or you think they think they know. Anyway, they're happy enough. Good-night."

And he curled himself up like a ball in his favourite sleeping-place. The two children crept into their pleasant, soft, sweet nest of straw and leaves and fern and grass, and went to sleep. But Selim was vexed with Thomasina because she had thought of mother before he had, and he said she had taken all the fun—and they went to sleep rather cross. They woke crosser. So far they had both helped to make the bed every morning, but to-day neither wanted to.

"I don't see why I should make the beds," said he; "it's a girl's work, not a boy's."

"I don't see why I should do it," said Thomasina; "it's a servant's work, not a young lady's."

And then a very strange and terrible thing happened. Quite suddenly, out of nothing and out of nowhere, appeared a housemaid—large and stern and very neat indeed, and she said:—

"You are quite right, miss: it is my place to make the beds. And I am instructed to see that you are both in bed by seven."

Think how dreadful this must have been to children who had been going to bed just when they felt inclined. They went out on to the beach.



"OUT OF NOWHERE APPEARED A HOUSEMAID."

"You see what comes of being naughty," said Thomasina; and Selim said, "Oh, shut up, do!"

They cheered up towards dinner-time—it was roast pigeons that day and bread sauce, and whitebait and syllabubs—and for the rest of the day they were as good as gold, and very polite to the Ball. Selim told it all about the dreadful apparition of the housemaid, and it shook its head (I know *you've* never seen a ball do that, and very likely you never will) and said:—

"My Bouncible Boy, you may be happy here for ever and ever if you're contented and good. Otherwise—well, it's a quarter to seven—you've got to go."

And, sure enough, they had to. And the housemaid put them to bed, and washed them with yellow soap, and some of it got in their eyes. And she lit a night-light, and sat with them till they went to sleep, so that they couldn't talk, and were ever so much longer getting to sleep than they would have

been if she had not been there. And the beds were iron, with mattresses and hot, stuffy, fluffy sheets and many more new blankets than they wanted.

The next day they got out as early as they could and played water football with the seal and the Bouncible Ball, and when dinner-time came it was lobster and ices. But Thomasina was in a bad temper. She said, "I wish it was duck." And before the words had left her lips it was cold mutton and rice-pudding, and they had to sit up to table and eat it properly too, and the housemaid came round to see that they didn't leave any bits on the edges of their plates, or talk with their mouths full.

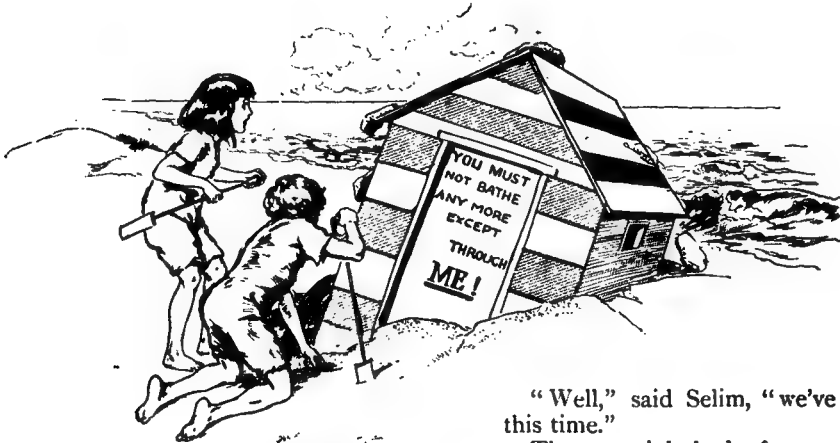
There were no more really nice meals after that: only the sort of things you get at home. But it is possible to be happy even without really nice meals. But you have to be very careful. The days went by pleasantly enough. All the sea and land creatures were most kind and attentive. The seal taught them all it knew, and was always ready to play with them. The star-fish taught them astronomy, and the jelly-fish taught them fancy cooking. The limpets taught them dancing, as well as they could for their lameness. The sea-birds taught them to make nests—a knowledge they have

this all would have been well. But they weren't.

"Let's dig a bath," said Selim, "and the sea will come in and fill it, and then we can bathe in it."

So they fetched their spades, and dug—and there was no harm in that, as you very properly remark.

But when the hole was finished, and the sea came creep, creep, creeping up—and at last a big wave thundered up the sand and swirled into the hole, Thomasina and Selim were struggling on the edge, fighting which should go in first, and the wave drew sandily back into the sea, and neither of them had bathed in the new bath. And now it was all wet and sandy, and its nice sharp edges rounded off, and much shallower. And as they looked at it angrily, the sandy bottom of the bath stirred and shifted and rose up—as if some great sea-beast were heaving underneath with his broad back. The wet sand slipped back in slabs at each side, and a long pointed thing like a thin cow's back came slowly up. It showed broader and broader, and presently the flakes of wet sand were dropping heavily off the top of a brand-new bathing machine that stood on the sand over where their bath had been.



H. C. MILLAR. 1930

"WE'VE DONE IT THIS TIME."

never needed to apply—and if the oysters did not teach them anything it was only because oysters are so very stupid, and not from any lack of friendly feeling.

The children bathed every day in the sea—and if they had only been content with

"Well," said Selim, "we've done it this time."

They certainly had—for on the door of the bathing machine was painted: "You must not bathe any more except through me."

So there was no more running into the sea just when and how they liked. They had to use the bathing machine, and it smelt of stale salt water and other people's wet towels.

After this the children did not seem to care so much about the seaside, and they played more on the downs, where the rabbits

were very kind and hospitable, and in the woods, where all sorts of beautiful flowers grew wild—and there was nobody to say "Don't," when you picked them. The children thought of what Uncle Thomas would have said if he had been there, and they were very, very happy.

But one day Thomasina had pulled a lot of white convolvulus and some pink geraniums and calceolarias—the kind you are never allowed to pick at home—and she had made a wreath of them and put it on her head.

Then Selim said: "You *are* silly! You look like a Bank Holiday."

And his sister said: "I can't help it. They'd look lovely on a hat, if they were only artificial. I wish I had a hat."

And she had. A large stiff hat that hurt her head just where the elastic was sewn on, and she had her stiff white frock that scratched, her tiresome underclothing, all of it, and stockings and heavy boots; and Selim had his sailor suit—the every-day one that was too tight in the arms; and they had to wear them always, and their fur coats were taken away.

They went sadly, all stiff and uncomfortable, and told the Bouncible Ball. It looked very grave, and great tears of salt water rolled down its red and green cheeks as it sat by the wet, seaweed-covered rock.

"Oh, you silly children," it said, "haven't you been warned enough? You've everything a reasonable child could wish for. Can't you be contented?"

"Of course we can," they said—and so they were—for a day and a half. And then it wasn't exactly discontent but real naughtiness that brought them to grief.

They were playing on the downs by the edge of the wood under the heliotrope tree. A hedge of camellia bushes cast a pleasant shadow, and out in the open sunlight on the downs the orchids grew like daisies, and the carnations like buttercups. All about was that kind of turf on which the gardener does not like you to play, and they had pulled arm-

fuls of lemon verbena and made a bed of it. But Selim's blouse was tight under the arms. So when Thomasina said:—

"Oh, Silly dear, how beautiful it is, just like fairyland," he said:—

"Silly yourself. There's no such thing as fairyland."

Just then a fairy, with little bright wings the colour of a peacock's tail, fluttered across the path, and settled on a magnolia flower.

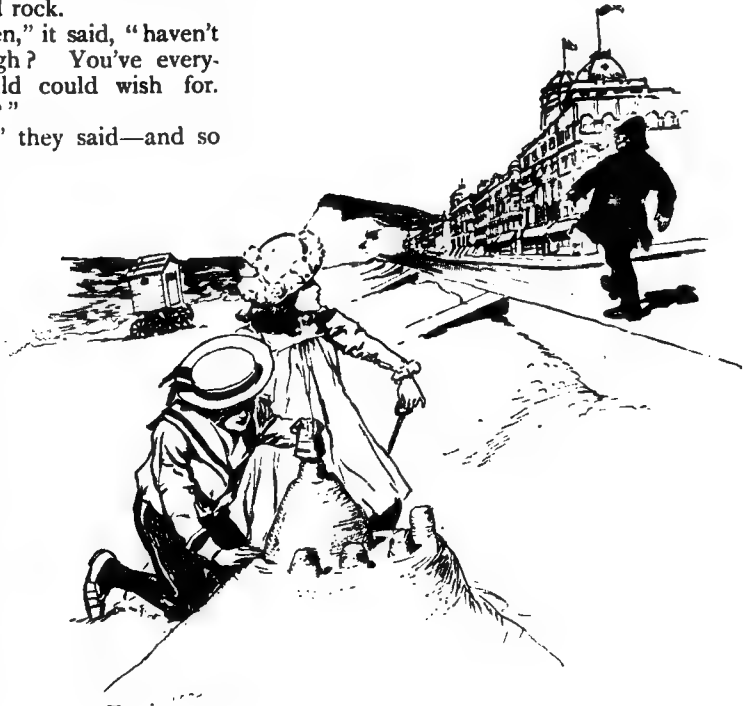
"Oh! Silly darling," cried Thomasina, "it *is* fairyland, and there's a fairy, such a beautiful dear. Look—there she goes."

But Selim would not look—he turned over and hid his eyes.

"There's no such thing as fairyland, I tell you," he grunted, "and I don't believe in fairies."

And then, quite suddenly and very horribly the fairy turned into a policeman—because everyone knows there are such things as policemen, and anyone can believe in *them*.

And all the rare and beautiful flowers withered up and disappeared, and only thorns and thistles were left, and the misty, twiny, trim little grass path that led along the top of the cliffs turned into a parade, and the policeman walked up and down it incessantly, and watched the children at their play, and you know how difficult it is



"THE POLICEMAN WALKED UP AND DOWN INCESSANTLY."

to play when anyone is watching you, especially a policeman. Selim was extremely vexed: that was why, he said, there couldn't possibly be glow-worms as big as bicycle lamps, which, of course, there were in "Whereyouwantogoto." It was after that that the gas-lamps were put all along the parade, and a pier sprang up, on purpose to be lighted with electricity, and a band played, because it is nonsense to have a pier without a band.

"Oh, you naughty, silly children," said the Bouncible Ball, turning red with anger, except in the part where he was green with disgust; "it makes me bounce with rage to see how you've thrown away your chances, and what a seaside resort you're making of 'Whereyouwantogoto.'"

And he did bounce, angrily, up and down the beach, till the housemaid looked out of the cave and told the children not to be so noisy, and the policeman called out:—

"Now then, move along there, move along. You're obstructing of the traffic."

And now I have something to tell you which you will find it hard to make any excuses for. I can't make any myself. I can only ask you to remember how hard it is to be even moderately good, and how easy it is to be extremely naughty.

When the Bouncible Ball stopped bouncing, Selim said:—

"I wonder what makes him bounce."

"Oh, no, *don't!*" cried Thomasina, for she had heard her brother wonder that about balls before, and she knew all too well what it ended in.

"Oh, *don't,*" she said, "oh, Silly, he brought us here, he's been so kind." But Selim said, "Nonsense; balls can't feel, and it will be almost as good to play with after I've looked inside it."

And then, before Thomasina could prevent him, he pulled out the knife Uncle Reggy gave him last holiday but one, and catching the Ball up, he plunged the knife into its side. The Bouncible Ball uttered one whiffing squeak of pain and grief, then with a low, hissing sigh its kindly spirit fled, and it lay, a lifeless mass of paint and india-rubber in the hands of its assassin. Thomasina burst into tears—but the heartless Selim tore open the Ball, and looked inside. You know well enough what he found there. Emptiness:

the little square patch of india-rubber that makes the hard lump on the outside of the ball which you feel with your fingers when the ball is alive and his own happy, bouncing, cheerful self.

The children stood looking at each other.

"I—I almost wish I hadn't," said Selim at last; but before Thomasina could answer he had caught her hand.

"Oh, look," he cried, "look at the sea."

It was, indeed, a dreadful sight. The beautiful dancing, sparkling blue sea was drying up before their eyes—in less than a moment it was quite flat and dusty. It hurriedly laid down a couple of railway lines, ran up a signal-box and telegraph-poles, and became the railway at the back of their house at home.

The children, gasping with horror, turned to the downs. From them tall, yellow brick houses were rising, as if drawn up by an invisible hand. Just as treacle does in cold weather if you put your five fingers in and pull them up. But, of course, you are never allowed to do this. The beach got hard—it was a pavement. The green downs turned grey—they were slate roofs—and Thomasina and Selim found themselves at the iron gate of their own number in the terrace—and there was Uncle Thomas at the window knocking for them to come in, and Aunt Selina calling out to them how far from respectable it was to play in the streets.

They were sent to bed at once—that was Aunt Selina's suggestion—and Uncle Thomas arranged that they should have only dry bread for tea.

Selim and Thomasina have never seen "Whereyouwantogoto" again, nor the Bouncible Ball—not even his poor body—and they don't deserve to either. Of course, Thomasina was not so much to blame as Selim, but she was punished just the same. I can't help that. This is really the worst of being naughty. You not only have to suffer for it yourself, but someone else always has to suffer too, generally the person who loves you best.

You are intelligent children, and I will not insult you with a moral. I am not Uncle Thomas. Nor will I ask you to remember what I have told you. I am not Aunt Selina.

# Melisande; or, The Long-Haired Princess.

A STORY FOR CHILDREN.

By E. NESBIT.



WHEN the Princess Melisande was born, her mother, the Queen, wished to have a christening party, but the King put his foot down and said he would not have it.

"I've seen too much trouble come of christening parties," said he. "However carefully you keep your visiting-book, some fairy or other is sure to get left out, and you know what *that* leads to. Why, even in my own family, the most shocking things have occurred. The Fairy Malevola was not asked to my great-grandmother's christening—and you know all about the spindle and the hundred years' sleep."

"Perhaps you're right," said the Queen. "My own cousin by marriage forgot some stuffy old fairy or other when she was sending out the cards for her daughter's christening, and the old wretch turned up at the last moment, and the girl drops toads out of her mouth to this day."

"Just so, said the King; "we'll have no nonsense about it. I'll be her godfather and you shall be her godmother, and we won't ask a single fairy, then none of them can be offended."

"Unless they all are," said the Queen.

And that was exactly what happened. When the King and the Queen and the baby got back from the christening the parlourmaid met them at the door, and said:—

"Please, your

Majesty, several ladies have called. I told them you were not at home, but they all said they'd wait."

"Are they in the parlour?" asked the Queer.

"I've shown them into the Throne Room, your Majesty," said the parlourmaid. "You see, there are several of them."

There were about seven hundred. The great Throne Room was crammed with fairies, of all ages and of all degrees of beauty and ugliness—good fairies and bad fairies, flower fairies and moon fairies, fairies like spiders and fairies like butterflies—and as the Queen opened the door and began to say how sorry she was to have kept them waiting, they all cried, with one voice, "Why didn't you ask *me* to your christening party?"

"I haven't had a party," said the Queen, and she turned to the King and whispered, "I told you so." This was her only consolation.

"You've had a christening," said the fairies, all together.

"I'm very sorry," said the poor Queen, but Malevola pushed forward and said, "Hold your tongue," most rudely.

Malevola is the oldest, as well as the most wicked, of the fairies. She is deservedly unpopular, and has been left out of more christening parties than all the rest of the fairies put together.

"Don't begin to make excuses," she said, shaking her finger at the Queen. "That only makes your conduct worse. You know well enough what happens if a fairy is



"DON'T BEGIN TO MAKE EXCUSES," SHE SAID."



left out of a christening party. We are all going to give our christening presents now. As the fairy of highest social position, I shall begin. The Princess shall be bald."

The Queen nearly fainted as Malevola drew back, and another fairy, in a smart bonnet with snakes in it, stepped forward with a rustle of bats' wings. But the King stepped forward too.

"No you don't!" said he. "I wonder at you, ladies, I do indeed. How can you be so unfairlylike? Have none of you been to school—have none of you studied the history of your own race? Surely you don't need a poor, ignorant King like me to tell you that this is *no go*?"

"How dare you?" cried the fairy in the bonnet, and the snakes in it quivered as she tossed her head. "It is my turn, and I say the Princess shall be——"

The King put his hand over her mouth.

"Look here," he said; "I won't have it. Listen to reason—or you'll be sorry afterwards. A fairy who breaks the traditions of fairy history goes out—you know she does—like the flame of a candle. And all tradition shows that only *one* bad fairy is ever forgotten at a christening party and the good ones are always invited; so either this is not a christening party, or else you were all invited except one, and, by her own showing, that was Malevola. It nearly always is. Do I make myself clear?"

Several of the better-class fairies who had been led away by Malevola's influence murmured that there was something in what His Majesty said.

"Try it, if you don't believe me," said the King; "give your nasty gifts to my innocent child—but as sure as you do, out you go, like a candle-flame. Now, then, will you risk it?"

No one answered, and presently several fairies came up to the Queen and said what a pleasant party it had been, but they really must be going. This example decided the rest. One by one all the fairies said good-bye and thanked the Queen for the delightful afternoon they had spent with her.

"It's been quite too lovely," said the lady with the bonnet; "*do* ask us again soon, dear Queen. I shall be so *longing* to see you again, and the *dear* baby," and off she went, with the snake-trimming quivering more than ever.

When the very last fairy was gone the Queen ran to look at the baby—she tore off

its Honiton lace cap and burst into tears. For all the baby's downy golden hair came off with the cap, and the Princess Melisande was as bald as an egg.

"Don't cry, my love," said the King. "I have a wish lying by, which I've never had occasion to use. My fairy godmother gave it me for a wedding present, but since then I've had nothing to wish for!"

"Thank you, dear," said the Queen, smiling through her tears.

"I'll keep the wish till baby grows up," the King went on. "And then I'll give it to her, and if she likes to wish for hair she can."

"Oh, won't you wish for it *now*?" said the Queen, dropping mixed tears and kisses on the baby's round head.

"No, dearest. She may want something else more when she grows up. And besides, her hair may grow by itself."

But it never did. Princess Melisande grew up as beautiful as the sun and as good as gold, but never a hair grew on that little head of hers. The Queen sewed her a little cap of green silk, and the Princess's pink and white face looked out of this like a flower peeping out of its bud. And every day as she grew older she grew dearer, and as she grew dearer she grew better, and as she grew more good she grew more beautiful.

Now, when she was grown up the Queen said to the King:—

"My love, our dear daughter is old enough to know what she wants. Let her have the wish."

So the King wrote to his fairy godmother and sent the letter by a butterfly. He asked if he might hand on to his daughter the wish the fairy had given him for a wedding present.

"I have never had occasion to use it," said he, "though it has always made me happy to remember that I had such a thing in the house. The wish is as good as new, and my daughter is now of an age to appreciate so valuable a present."

To which the fairy replied by return of butterfly:—

"DEAR KING,—Pray do whatever you like with my poor little present. I had quite forgotten it, but I am pleased to think that you have treasured my humble keepsake all these years.

"Your affectionate godmother,

"FORTUNA F."

So the King unlocked his gold safe with the seven diamond-handled keys that hung at his girdle, and took out the wish and gave it to his daughter.

And Melisande said : " Father, I will wish that all your subjects should be quite happy."

But they were that already, because the King and Queen were so good. So the wish did not go off.

So then she said : " Then I wish them all to be good."

But they were that already, because they were happy. So again the wish hung fire.

Then the Queen said : " Dearest, for my sake wish what I tell you."

" Why, of course I will," said Melisande. The Queen whispered in her ear, and Melisande nodded. Then she said, aloud :—

" I wish I had golden hair a yard long, and that it would grow an inch every day, and grow twice as fast every time it was cut, and—"

" Stop," cried the King. And the wish went off, and the next moment the Princess stood smiling at him through a shower of golden hair.

" Oh, how lovely," said the Queen. " What a pity you interrupted her, dear ; she hadn't finished."

" What was the end ?" asked the King.

" Oh," said Melisande, " I was only going to say, ' and twice as thick.'"

" It's a very good thing you didn't," said her father. " You've done about enough." For he had a mathematical mind, and could do the sums about the grains of wheat on the chess-board, and the nails in the horse's shoes, in his Royal head without any trouble at all.

" Why, what's the matter ?" asked the Queen.

" You'll know soon enough," said the King. " Come, let's be happy while we may. Give me a kiss, little Melisande, and then go to nurse and ask her to teach you how to comb your hair."

" I know," said Melisande ; " I've often combed mother's."

" Your mother has beautiful hair," said the King ; " but I fancy you will find your own less easy to manage."

And, indeed, it was so. The Princess's hair began by being a yard long, and it grew an inch every night. If you know anything at all about the simplest sums you will see that in about five weeks her hair was about two yards long. This is a very inconvenient length. It trails on the floor and sweeps up all the dust, and though in palaces, of course, it is all gold-dust, still it is not nice to have it in your hair. And the Princess's hair was growing an inch every night. When it was three yards long the Princess could not bear

it any longer—it was so heavy and so hot—so she borrowed nurse's cutting-out scissors and cut it all off, and then for a few hours she was comfortable. But the hair went on growing, and now it grew twice as fast as before ; so that in thirty-six days it was as long as ever. The poor Princess cried with tiredness, and when she couldn't bear it any more she cut it off, and was comfortable for a very little time. For the hair now grew four times as fast as at first, and in eighteen days it was as long as before, and she had to have it cut. Then it grew eight inches a day, and the next time it was cut it grew sixteen inches a day, and then thirty-two inches and sixty-four inches and a hundred and twenty-eight inches a day, and so on, growing twice as fast after each cutting, till the Princess would go to bed at night with her hair clipped short, and wake up in the morning with yards and yards and yards of golden hair flowing all about the room, so that she could not move without pulling her own hair, and nurse had to come in and cut her hair off before she could get out of bed.

" I wish I was bald again," sighed poor Melisande, looking at the little green cap she used to wear, and she cried herself to sleep o' nights between the growing billows of the golden hair. But she never let her mother see her cry, because it was the Queen's fault, and Melisande did not want to seem to reproach her.

When first the Princess's hair grew her mother sent locks of it to all her Royal relations, who had them set in rings and brooches. Later, the Queen was able to send enough for bracelets and girdles. But presently so much hair was cut off that they had to burn it. Then when autumn came all the crops failed ; it seemed as though all the gold of harvest had gone into the Princess's hair. And there was a famine. Then Melisande said :—

" It seems a pity to waste all my hair ; it grows so very fast. Couldn't we stuff things with it, or something, and sell them, to feed the people ?"

So the King called a council of merchants, and they sent out samples of the Princess's hair, and soon orders came pouring in ; and the Princess's hair became the staple export of that country. They stuffed pillows with it, and they stuffed beds with it. They made ropes of it for sailors to use, and curtains for hanging in Kings' palaces. They made haircloth of it, for hermits and people who wished to be uncomfy. But it was so soft and silky that it only made them happy

and warm, which they did not wish to be. So the hermits gave up wearing it, and, instead, mothers bought it for their little babies, and all well-born infants wore little shirts of Princess-haircloth.

And still the hair grew and grew. And the people were fed and the famine came to an end.

Then the King said: "It was all very well while the famine lasted—but now I shall write to my fairy godmother and see if something cannot be done."

So he wrote and sent the letter by a skylark, and by return of bird came this answer:—

"Why not advertise for a competent Prince? Offer the usual reward."

So the King sent out his heralds all over the world to proclaim that any respectable Prince with proper references should marry the Princess Melisande if he could stop her hair growing.

Then from far and near came trains of Princes anxious to try their luck, and they

rather glad that none of the nasty things in bottles and boxes made the least difference to her hair.

The Princess had to sleep in the great Throne Room now, because no other room was big enough to hold her and her hair. When she woke in the morning the long high room would be quite full of her golden hair, packed tight and thick like wool in a barn. And every night when she had had the hair cut close to her head she would sit in her green silk gown by the window and cry, and kiss the little green cap she used to wear, and wish herself bald again.

It was as she sat crying there on Midsummer Eve that she first saw Prince Florizel.

He had come to the palace that evening, but he would not appear in her presence with the dust of travel on him, and she had retired with her hair borne by twenty pages before he had bathed and changed his garments and entered the reception-room.

Now he was walking in the garden in the

moonlight, and he looked up and she looked down, and for the first time Melisande, looking on a Prince, wished that he might have the power to stop her hair from growing. As for the Prince, he wished many things, and the first was granted him. For he said:—

"You are Melisande?"

"And you are Florizel?"

"There are many roses round your window," said he to her, "and none down here."

She threw him one of three white roses she

held in her hand. Then he said:—

"White rose trees are strong. May I climb up to you?"

"Surely," said the Princess.

So he climbed up to the window.



"FROM FAR AND NEAR CAME TRAINS OF PRINCES."

brought all sorts of nasty things with them in bottles and round wooden boxes. The Princess tried all the remedies, but she did not like any of them, and she did not like any of the Princes, so in her heart she was

"Now," said he, "if I can do what your father asks, will you marry me?"

"My father has promised that I shall," said Melisande, playing with the white roses in her hand.

"Dear Princess," said he, "your father's promise is nothing to me. I want yours. Will you give it to me?"

"Yes," said she, and gave him the second rose.

"I want your hand."

"Yes," she said.

"And your heart with it."

"Yes," said the Princess, and she gave him the third rose.

"And a kiss to seal the promise."

"Yes," said she.

"And a kiss to go with the hand."

"Yes," she said.

"And a kiss to bring the heart."

"Yes," said the Princess, and she gave him the three kisses.

"Now," said he, when he had given them back to her, "to-night do not go to bed. Remain by your window, and I will stay down here in the garden and watch. And when your hair has grown to the filling of your room call to me, and then do as I tell you."

"I will," said the Princess.

So at dewy sunrise the Prince, lying on the turf beside the sun-dial, heard her voice:—

"Florizel! Florizel! My hair has grown so long that it is pushing me out of the window."

"Get out on to the window-sill," said he, "and twist your hair three times round the great iron hook that is there."

And she did.

Then the Prince climbed up the rose bush with his naked sword in his teeth, and he took the Princess's hair in his hand about a yard from her head and said:—

"Jump!"

The Princess jumped, and screamed, for there she was hanging from the hook by a yard and a half of her bright hair; the Prince

tightened his grasp of the hair and drew his sword across it.

Then he let her down gently by her hair till her feet were on the grass, and jumped down after her.

They stayed talking in the garden till all the shadows had crept under their proper trees and the sun-dial said it was breakfast time.

Then they went in to breakfast, and all the Court crowded round to wonder and admire. For the Princess's hair had not grown.

"How did you do it?" asked the King, shaking Florizel warmly by the hand.

"The simplest thing in the world," said Florizel, modestly. "You have always cut the hair off the Princess. I just cut the Princess off the hair."

"Humph!" said the King, who had a logical mind. And during breakfast he more than once looked anxiously at his daughter. When they got up from breakfast the Princess rose with the rest, but she rose and rose and rose, till it seemed as though there would never be an end of it. The Princess was 9ft. high.

"I feared as much," said the King, sadly. "I

wonder what will be the rate of progression. You see," he said to poor Florizel, "when we cut the hair off *it* grows—when we cut the Princess off *she* grows. I wish you had happened to think of that!"

The Princess went on growing. By dinner-time she was so large that she had to have her dinner brought out into the garden because she was too large to get indoors. But she was too unhappy to be able to eat anything. And she cried so much that there was quite a pool in the garden, and several pages were nearly drowned. So she remembered her "Alice in Wonderland," and stopped crying at once. But she did not



"THEY STAYED TALKING IN THE GARDEN."

stop growing. She grew bigger and bigger and bigger, till she had to go outside the palace gardens and sit on the common, and even that was too small to hold her comfortably, for every hour she grew twice as much as she had done the hour before. And nobody knew what to do, nor where the Princess was to sleep. Fortunately, her clothes had grown with her, or she would have been very cold indeed, and now she sat on the common in her green gown, embroidered with gold, looking like a great hill covered with gorse in flower.

You cannot possibly imagine how large the Princess was growing, and her mother stood wringing her hands on the castle tower, and the Prince Florizel looked on broken-hearted to see his Princess snatched from his arms and turned into a lady as big as a mountain.

The King did not weep or look on. He sat down at once and wrote to his fairy god-mother, asking her advice. He sent a weasel with the letter, and by return of weasel he got his own letter back again, marked "Gone away. Left no address."

It was now, when the kingdom was plunged into gloom, that a neighbouring King took it into his head to send an invading army against the island where Melisande lived. They came in ships and landed in great numbers, and Melisande looking down from her height saw alien soldiers marching on the sacred soil of her country.

"I don't mind so much now," said she,  
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"if I can really be of some use this size."

And she picked up the army of the enemy in handfuls and double-handfuls, and put them back into their ships, and gave a little flip to each transport ship with her finger and thumb, which sent the ships off so fast that they never stopped till they reached their own country, and when they arrived there the whole army to a man said it would rather

be court-martialled a hundred times over than go near the place again.

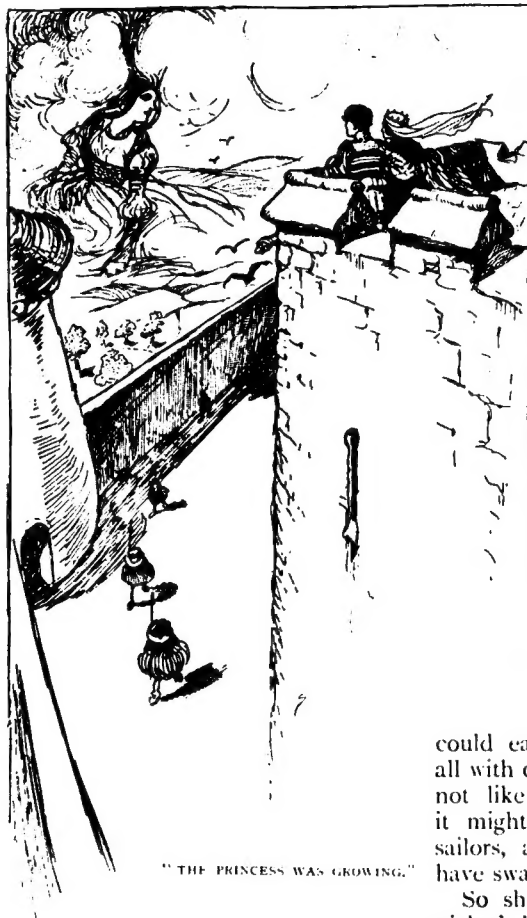
Meantime Melisande, sitting on the highest hill on the island, felt the land trembling and shivering under her giant feet.

"I do believe I'm getting too heavy," she said, and jumped off the island into the sea, which was just up to her ankles. Just then a great fleet of warships and gunboats and torpedo boats came in sight, on their way to attack the island.

Melisande could easily have sunk them all with one kick, but she did not like to do this because it might have drowned the sailors, and besides, it might have swamped the island.

So she simply stooped and picked the island as you would pick a mushroom—for, of course, all islands are supported by a stalk underneath—and carried it away to another part of the world. So that when the warships got to where the island was marked on the map they found nothing but sea, and a very rough sea it was, because the Princess had churned it all up with her ankles as she walked away through it with the island.

When Melisande reached a suitable place, very sunny and warm, and with no sharks in



"THE PRINCESS WAS GROWING."

the water, she set down the island; and the people made it fast with anchors, and then everyone went to bed, thanking the kind fate which had sent them so great a Princess to help them in their need, and calling her the saviour of her country and the bulwark of the nation.

But it is poor work being the nation's bulwark and your country's saviour when you are miles high, and have no one to talk to, and when all you want is to be your humble right size again and to marry your sweetheart. And when it was dark the Princess came close to the island, and looked down, from far up, at her palace and her tower and cried, and cried, and cried. It does not matter how much you cry into the sea, it hardly makes any difference, however large you may be. Then when everything was quite dark the Princess looked up at the stars.

"I wonder how soon I shall be big enough to knock my head against them," said she.

And as she stood star-gazing she heard a whisper right in her ear. A very little whisper, but quite plain.

"Cut off your hair!" it said.

Now, everything the Princess was wearing had grown big along with her, so that now there dangled from her golden girdle a pair of scissors as big as the Malay Peninsula, together with a pin-cushion the size of the Isle of Wight, and a yard measure that would have gone round Australia.

And when she heard the little, little voice, she knew it, small as it was, for the dear voice of Prince Florizel, and she whipped out the scissors from their gold case and snip, snip, snipped all her hair off, and it fell into the sea. The coral insects got hold of it at once and set to work on it, and now they have made it into the biggest coral reef in the world; but that has nothing to do with the story.

Then the voice said, "Get close to the island," and the Princess did, but she could not get very close because she was so large, and she looked up again at the stars and they seemed to be much farther off.

Then the voice said, "Be ready to swim," and she felt something climb out of her ear and clamber down her arm. The stars got farther and farther away, and next moment the Princess found herself swimming in the sea, and Prince Florizel swimming beside her.

"I crept on to your hand when you were carrying the island," he explained, when their

feet touched the sand and they walked in through the shallow water, "and I got into your ear with an ear-trumpet. You never noticed me because you were so great then."

"Oh, my dear Prince," cried Melisande, falling into his arms, "you have saved me. I am my proper size again."

So they went home and told the King and Queen. Both were very, very happy, but the King rubbed his chin with his hand, and said:—

"You've certainly had some fun for your money, young man, but don't you see that we're just where we were before? Why, the child's hair is growing already."

And indeed it was.

Then once more the King sent a letter to his godmother. He sent it by a flying-fish, and by return of fish came the answer:—

"Just back from my holidays. Sorry for your troubles. Why not try scales?"

And on this message the whole Court pondered for weeks.

But the Prince caused a pair of gold scales to be made, and hung them up in the palace gardens under a big oak tree. And one morning he said to the Princess:—

"My darling Melisande, I must really speak seriously to you. We are getting on in life. I am nearly twenty: it is time that we thought of being settled. Will you trust me entirely and get into one of those gold scales?"

So he took her down into the garden, and helped her into the scale, and she curled up in it in her green and gold gown, like a little grass mound with buttercups on it.

"And what is going into the other scale?" asked Melisande.

"Your hair," said Florizel. "You see, when your hair is cut off you it grows, and when you are cut off your hair you grow—oh, my heart's delight, I can never forget how you grew, never! But if, when your hair is no more than you, and you are no more than your hair, I snip the scissors between you and it, then neither you nor your hair can possibly decide which ought to go on growing."

"Suppose *both* did," said the poor Princess, humbly.

"Impossible," said the Prince, with a shudder; "there are limits even to Malevola's malevolence. And, besides, Fortuna said 'Scales.' Will you try it?"

"I will do whatever you wish," said the poor Princess, "but let me kiss my father



and mother once, and Nurse, and you, too, my dear, in case I grow large again and can kiss nobody any more."

So they came one by one and kissed the Princess.

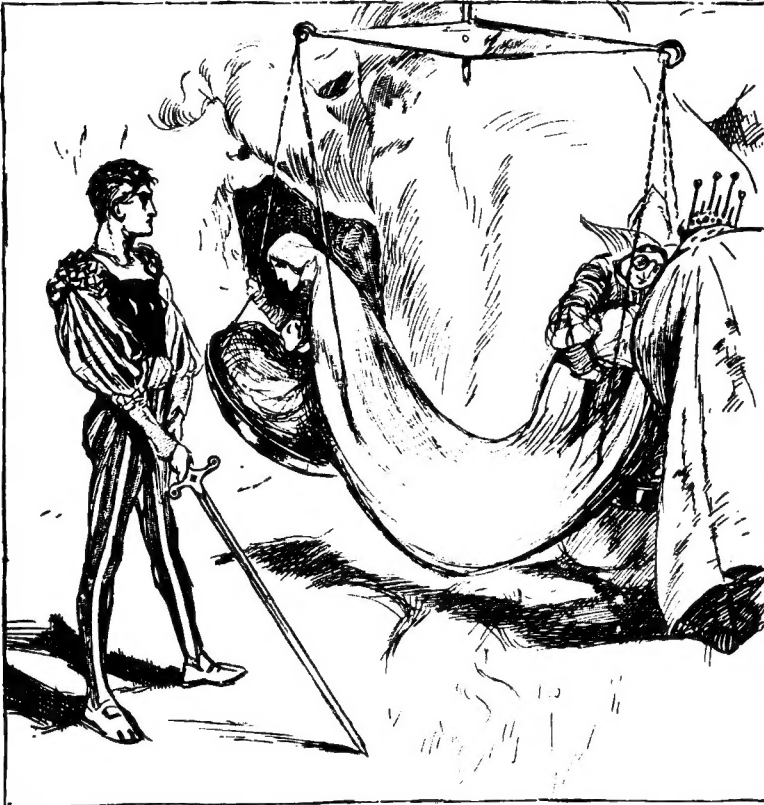
Then the nurse cut off the Princess's hair, and at once it began to grow at a frightful rate.

The King and Queen and nurse busily packed it, as it grew, into the other scale, and gradually the scale went down a little. The Prince stood waiting between the scales

ment," said the King, embracing him, while the Queen and the nurse ran to help the Princess out of the gold scale.

The scale full of golden hair bumped down on to the ground as the Princess stepped out of the other one, and stood there before those who loved her, laughing and crying with happiness, because she remained her proper size, and her hair was not growing any more.

She kissed her Prince a hundred times, and the very next day they were married.



"THE PRINCE STOOD WAITING BETWEEN THE SCALES WITH HIS DRAWN SWORD."

with his drawn sword, and just before the two were equal he struck. But during the time his sword took to flash through the air the Princess's hair grew a yard or two, so that at the instant when he struck the balance was true.

"You are a young man of sound judg-

Everyone remarked on the beauty of the bride, and it was noticed that her hair was quite short—only 5ft. 5¼in. long—just down to her pretty ankles. Because the scales had been 10ft. 10½in. apart, and the Prince having a straight eye had cut the golden hair exactly in the middle!